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MODERN SPIRITISM

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MODERN SPIRITISM

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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ITS PHENOMENA, CHARACTER, AND TEACHING, IN THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWN FACTS

BY

J. GODFREY RAUPERT

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PREFACE

THE contents of this work will be found to more than justify its publication.

The modern spiritistic movement, so strongly supported by recent scientific utterances, is increasingly affecting all classes and conditions of society, and is beginning to undermine the religious belief and convictions of thousands of serious-minded but not very accurately informed persons. The basis of this movement is the claim that the spirits of the dead are habitually communicating with us through the agency of sensitives, and that the disclosures which they are making are of an authoritative character, and have a deeply important bearing upon our life and our religious beliefs.

A systematic study of the subject, extended over a long period of years and carried on under exceptionally favourable circumstances, has thoroughly convinced the author that this popular and widely accepted view of the matter is a mistaken one, and that the modern spiritistic theory is untenable.

Information of a deeply interesting and suggestive character, which has quite recently come

into his possession, has gone to still further confirm and strengthen this conviction, and has been the immediate cause of his preparing the present work.

The author earnestly commends the facts set forth in this volume, supported as they are by such incontrovertible and overwhelming testimony, to the serious attention of all fair-minded and unprejudiced inquirers.

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MODERN SPIRITISM

I

THE EVIDENCE

IN really well-informed circles there is no longer any doubt that in the presence of certain peculiarly constituted individuals, and under conditions hereafter to be described, a series of abnormal phenomena can be induced which cannot be accounted for by science and by the known laws of nature, and that many of these phenomena are objective in character and are directed by extraneous intelligence or intelligences.

The patient and prolonged research of men of note, many of whom are well-known experimenters in other fields of scientific inquiry, has recently yielded a large and unexpected amount of evidence, the value and significance of which is increased and strengthened by the consideration that many of them entered upon the inquiry with a pronouncedly sceptical attitude of mind, if not with the distinct desire to disprove, if possible, the occurrence of these phenomena. So abundant and spontaneous, indeed, has been the testimony that, as the late Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge observed

some years ago, "the facts must either be admitted to be such as they are, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up."

It is not here proposed to present a record of the circumstances under which the phenomena in question were first observed, nor to trace the origin of the modern movements of thought which, in the course of time, have come to be constructed upon them. Such information may easily be gathered from some of the popular works on the history and progress of Modern Spiritism and Occultism which have, from time to time, issued from the Press. Testimony is simply borne to the fact that the first impulse which, here in England, was given to the systematic and scientific study of the subject was due to individual, unscientific, and sometimes quite unknown observers, who, in spite of much obloquy, and of the scornful indifference of orthodox science, continued their investigations and persisted in maintaining the objective and demonstrable character of many of the phenomena. And if science now, in the persons of those of its prominent men whom the ever-increasing amount and force of evidence has impelled to investigate the subject, and whose patient and painstaking labours have led to certain undeniable and very generally accepted results, takes up a positive and affirmative attitude, it should not be forgotten that that attitude was taken up and persistently defended by humble observers long be-

fore a single scientific man could be induced to study the subject, and before the present Society for Psychical Research existed.

"The belief of the uneducated and unscientific world," in fact, as Professor Alfred Russel Wallace so justly observes, "rested on a broad basis of alleged facts which the scientific world scouted and scoffed at as absurd and impossible. But they are now discovering . . . that the alleged facts, one after another, prove to be real facts, and, strange to say, with little or no exaggeration, since almost every one of them, though implying abnormal powers in human beings, or the agency of a spirit world around us, has been strictly paralleled in the present day and has been subjected to the close scrutiny of the scientific and sceptical with little or no modification of their essential nature." [1]

Or, as the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, speaking of the phenomena of mesmerism and of the scientific attitude respecting them, said in his presidential address, delivered before the Society for Psychical Research in 1894: —

"If you take the opinion of men of science generally, you will be driven to the conclusion that they either denied facts which they ought to have seen were true, or that they thrust them aside with-

[1] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, 1896.

out condescending to consider them worthy of serious investigation. . . . I think the time has now come when it is desirable, in their own interests and in our interests, that the leaders of scientific thought in this country and elsewhere should recognise that there are well-attested facts which, though they do not easily fit into the framework of the sciences, or of organised experience as they conceive it, yet require investigation and explanation, which it is the bounden duty of science, if not itself to investigate, at all events to assist us in investigating."

While it is then by no means maintained that intellectual or scientific distinction is necessarily a guarantee of judicial fairness or of the power of accurately weighing and estimating evidence, it is nevertheless fully recognised that it is to the conclusions of the trained and accredited scientific mind that the larger proportion of thinking persons are apt to attach most weight. And it is for this reason that it is chiefly the scientific evidence which it is proposed to adduce here with a view to demonstrating that, after prolonged and painstaking research, in this and other countries, the conventional attitude respecting the phenomena under consideration has been abandoned, and that the best science of the day has practically pronounced in their favour. It is felt, moreover, that such evidence cannot fail to

be found of value to that daily increasing number of persons who experience considerable difficulty in making up their minds respecting the nature and origin of these phenomena, and who may be disposed to seek the explanation of all of them in some of those still obscure and little understood powers lying latent in our human nature.

The inquiry has gone too far and the public interest in the subject is too great and too much on the increase for such an attitude of the mind to be a desirable and a safe one. If it be true that many of the phenomena, so frequently observed in connection with experiments increasingly resorted to for the purpose of mere amusement and entertainment, are due to extranous intelligence or intelligences, it is better and safer that this fact should be thoroughly known and realised, seeing that it is only thus that the moral and physical dangers which beyond all doubt attend some of these experiments, can be fully understood and recognised.

As long ago as 1869 the sub-committee of the Dialectical Society of London, appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the nature and reality of the alleged phenomena, issued the following statements in connection with its official report: —

"The result of our long-continued and carefully conducted experiments, after trial by every detective test we could devise, has established conclusively:

"1. That under certain bodily or mental conditions of one or more of the persons present, a force is exhibited sufficient to set in motion heavy substances, without the employment of any muscular force, without contact or material connection of any kind between such substances and the body of any person present.

"2. That this force can cause sounds to proceed, distinctly audible to all present, from solid substances not in contact with, nor having any visible or material connection with, the body of any person present, and which sounds are proved to proceed from such substances by the vibrations which are distinctly felt when they are touched.

"3. That this force is frequently directed by intelligence."

In 1874 Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., published in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* the result of his researches into the obscure phenomena of spiritism and mediumship which he had carried on for a number of years, with the aid of specially devised scientific instruments and under conditions wholly precluding the possibility of fraud. The conclusions he had arrived at were briefly stated as follows: —

"Whilst I have observed many circumstances which appear to show that the will and intelligence

of the medium have much to do with the phenomena, I have observed some circumstances which seem conclusively to point to the agency of an outside intelligence, not belonging to any human being in the room."

Nearly twenty-five years later (in 1898) Sir William Crookes delivered the presidential address before the British Association at Bristol, in the course of which he made the following statement: —

"No incident in my scientific career is more widely known than the part I took, many years ago, in certain psychic researches. Thirty years have passed since I published an account of experiments tending to show that outside our scientific knowledge there exists a force, *exercised by intelligence,* differing from the ordinary intelligence common to mortals. This fact in my life is, of course, well understood by those who honoured me with the invitation to become your President. Perhaps among my audience some may feel curious as to whether I shall speak out or be silent. I elect to speak, although briefly. To enter at length on a still debatable subject would be unduly to insist on a topic which — as Wallace, Lodge, and Barrett have already shown — though not unfitted for discussion at these meetings, does not yet enlist the interest of the majority of my scientific brethren. To ignore

the subject would be an act of cowardice I feel no intention to commit.

"To stop short at any research that bids fair to widen the gates of knowledge, to recoil from fear of difficulty or adverse criticism, is to bring reproach on science. There is nothing for the investigator to do but to go straight on, 'to explore up and down, inch by inch, with the taper his reason'; to follow the light wherever it may lead, even should it at times resemble a will-o'-the-wisp. *I have nothing to retract. I adhere to my already published statements. Indeed, I might add much thereto.* I regret only a certain crudity in those early expositions which, no doubt justly, militated against their acceptance by the scientific world. My own knowledge at that time scarcely extended beyond the fact that certain phenomena new to science had assuredly occurred and were attested by my sober senses and, better still, by automatic record."

Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, describing the process of thought by which the conviction of the reality of the phenomena was reached by his own mind, writes as follows: —

"From the age of fourteen I lived with an elder brother of advanced liberal and philosophical opinions, and I soon lost — and have never since re-

gained — all capacity of being affected in my judgment either by clerical influence or religious prejudice. Up to the time when I first became acquainted with the facts of spiritualism I was a confirmed philosophical sceptic, rejoicing in the works of Voltaire, Strauss, and Carl Vogt, and an ardent admirer — as I am still — of Herbert Spencer. I was so thoroughly and confirmed a materialist that I could not at that time find a place in my mind for the conception of spiritual existence or for any other agencies in the universe than matter and force. Facts, however, are stubborn things. . . . The facts beat me. They compelled me to accept them as facts long before I could accept the spiritual explanation of them. There was at that time no place in my fabric of thought into which it could have fitted. By slow degrees a place was made, but it was made not by any preconceived or theoretical opinions, but by the continuous action of fact upon fact which could not be got rid of in any other way. . . . That theory is most scientific which best explains the whole series of phenomena, and I therefore claim that the spirit hypothesis is most scientific. Those who believe as I do — that spiritual beings can and do, subject to general laws and for certain purposes, communicate with us — must see in the steady advance of inquiry the assurance that, so far as their beliefs are logical deductions from

the phenomena they have witnessed, those beliefs will at no distant date be accepted by all truth-seeking inquirers."

Mr. W. F. Barrett, Professor of Experimental Physics in the University of Ireland, sums up the result of his own prolonged investigation of the subject in these brief words: —

"What I am prepared to assert, from my own experience, is that neither hallucination, imposture, mal-observation, misdescription, nor any other well-recognised cause can account for the phenomena I have witnessed and that the simplest explanation is the spirit hypothesis."

The following further testimonies of men eminent in different branches of science and of literature, and known as careful and painstaking investigators of occult phenomena, will be found of value to the student.

Professor Sir Oliver Lodge, Birmingham (from his presidential address delivered before the Society for Psychical Research on January 31st, 1892): —

"If anyone cares to hear what sort of conviction has been borne in upon my own mind, as a scientific man, by some twenty years' familiarity with those questions which concern us, I am very willing to reply as frankly as I can. First, then, I am, for all

personal purposes, convinced of the persistence of human existence beyond bodily death; and though I am unable to justify that belief in a full and complete manner, yet it is a belief which has been produced by scientific evidence — that is, it is based upon facts and experience."

The late Professor Henry Sidgwick, of Cambridge, and the first President of the Society for Psychical Research, writing in 1893: —

"Although I do not myself at present regard the theory of 'unembodied intelligences' as the only hypothesis which will account for known facts, I admit that it is the hypothesis most obviously suggested by some of these facts."

The late Frederick W. H. Myers, from his recently published work, *Human Personality:* —

"I will here briefly state what facts they are which our recorded apparitions, etc., to my mind, actually prove.

"(*a*) In the first place, they prove survival pure and simple; the persistence of the spirit's life as a structural law of the universe; the inalienable heritage of each several soul.

"(*b*) In the second place, they prove that between the spiritual and the material worlds an avenue of communication does in fact exist; that which we call the despatch and the receipt of telepathic mes-

sages, or the utterance and the answer of prayer and supplication.

"(*c*) In the third place, they prove that the surviving spirit retains, at least in some measure, the memories and the loves of earth. Without this persistence of love and memory should we be in truth the *same?* To what extent has any philosophy or any revelation assured us hereof till now?

"The above points, I think, are certain, if the apparitions and messages proceed in reality from the *sources* which they claim. On a lower evidential level comes the thesis drawn from the *contents* of the longer messages, which contents may, of course, be influenced in unknown degree by the expectation of the recipients or by some such infusion of dreamlike matter as I have already mentioned. That thesis is as follows. I offer it for what it may be worth: Every element of individual wisdom, virtue, love, develops in infinite evolution toward an ever-highering hope; toward 'Him who is at once thine innermost Self, and thine ever unattainable Desire.'"

The late Professor De Morgan, President of the Mathematical Society, London, and afterwards Dean of University College:—

"I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief

impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me."

Dr. Charles Richet, Professor of Physiology at the University of Paris (from an address on "The Conditions of Certainty," delivered before the Society for Psychical Research on January 27th, 1899):—

"In the course of these studies (in Somnambulism) I have here and there observed certain facts of lucidity, of premonition, of telepathy: but since these facts were denied and ridiculed on every side, I had not pushed independence of mind so far as to believe them. I deliberately shut my eyes to phenomena which lay plain before me, and rather than discuss them I chose the easier course of denying them altogether. Or, I should rather say, instead of pondering on these inexplicable facts, I simply put them aside, and set them down to some illusion, or some error of observation. Nay, in my servile respect for the classic tradition I mocked at what was called spiritism; and after reading the astounding statements which Mr. Crookes had published, I allowed myself — and here do I publicly beg his pardon for it! — to laugh at them as heartily as almost everyone else was doing. But now I say just what my friend Ochorowicz says in the same

matter. I beat my breast and I cry: Pater peccavi! How could I suppose that the savant who has discovered thallium and the radiometer and foreshadowed the Röntgen rays, could commit gross and inexplicable blunders and allow himself to be duped for years by tricks which a child could have exposed?

"A certain experiment in spiritism . . . came to shake my belief . . . (Some years later) when I left Milan I was fully convinced that all was true — as also were the eminent savants who took part in the sittings: Brofferio, Gerosa, Finzi, and the great astronomer Schiaparelli. . . . (But) after we have witnessed such facts, everything concurs to make us doubt them. Now at this moment when these facts take place they seem to us certain, and we are willing to proclaim them openly, but when we return to ourselves, when we feel the irresistible influence of our environment, when our friends all laugh at our credulity,— then we are almost disarmed and we begin to doubt. May I not have been grossly deceived? I saw, no doubt, but did I see aright? Who can prove to me that I did so? And then as the moment of the experiment becomes more remote, that experiment which once seemed so conclusive gets to seem more and more uncertain, and we end by letting ourselves be persuaded that we have been the victims of a trick. . . . The real world which sur-

rounds us, with its prejudices, well or ill founded, its scheme of habitual opinions, holds us in so strong a grasp that we can scarcely free ourselves completely. Certainty does not follow on demonstration, it follows on habit. . . . I have still a trace of doubt; doubt which is weak, indeed, to-day, but which may perchance be stronger to-morrow. Yet such doubts, if they come, will not be due so much to any defect in the actual experiment, as to the inexorable strength of prepossession which holds one back from adopting a conclusion which contravenes the habitual and almost unconscious opinion of mankind."

Dr. Frederic H. Van Eeden, a Dutch scientist (from his paper read at the Fourth International Congress of Psychology in Paris in 1901): —

"Academical science, obliged at last to turn attention to these matters, if only in order to protect its own sacred theories, and to combat a heresy which began to become disquieting, has succeeded in reducing considerably the number of the phenomena declared to be convincing. Nevertheless, there always remain some which the most serious and scrupulous observers consider to be inexplicable according to physical laws. These are of two kinds — physical phenomena and psychical phenomena. It is to the second of these alone that I have paid

sufficient attention to enable me to form a decided opinion.

"To be exact, there are persons endowed with exceptional faculties which give them knowledge, impossible to obtain by means of the senses. On this point all serious and scientific investigators who have been occupied for any length of time, and deeply, with the subject are in agreement. Fifteen years ago spiritualists had to be content to parade the names of Fechner, Zoellner, and Sir William Crookes. Now, if we reckon merely those scientists who accept the reality of the facts without theorising as to their explanation, the list is much larger. After repeated experiences with Mrs. Thompson, I venture to classify myself among the convinced.

". . . I have found it very difficult to theoretically contravene the opinion that neither telepathy nor clairvoyance exist as personal faculties, but that all is the work of spirits. According to this opinion — which is maintained by men of high intelligence, such as Russel Wallace — spirits surround us always and in all places, and, not having anything more pressing to occupy them, are constantly employed communicating to us impulses, ideas, and fancies, which, according to their character, are beneficent or malicious, and are agreeable or terrible, insignificant or marvellous, according to our degree of impressionableness or our condition of

health or morbidity. After this manner may be explained telepathy, clairvoyance, the faculties attributed to the unconscious mind, dreams, and even the hallucinations and fancies of the insane.

"This position has seemed to me a very strong one. Whilst studying the dreams and morbid ideas of the insane, I have had a very vivid impression that a malign, diabolical, or demoniac influence was concerned with them, profiting by the physical weakness of a man to instil into him all sorts of terrible, sad, and absurd fancies.

"It has always seemed to me very improbable that all this is to be explained by reference to the unconscious, or to a secondary, personality. And, besides, all these modern psychological terms, such as unconscious, subliminal, secondary, or tertiary personality, are they much clearer or more scientific than the terms 'demon,' 'spirit,' or 'ghost'?

"In these difficult matters we are obliged largely to rely on our personal impressions, and to form conceptions more or less intuitive. This does not seem very precise, but it is inevitable, and, moreover, it is the same in all branches of science. Even astronomy rests on personal impressions (but verified by many) and upon intuitive conceptions of probability, confirmed by repeated observation."

Dr. R. Hodgson, U.S.A. (from "Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance," published in Part

xxxiii. of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,* 1897–8) : —

"Having tried the hypothesis of telepathy from the living for several years, and the 'spirit' hypothesis also for several years, I have no hesitation in affirming with the most absolute assurance that the spirit hypothesis is justified by its fruits and the other hypothesis is not."

Professor J. H. Hyslop, PH.D., Columbia University, New York, U.S.A. (from "Observations of Certain Trance Phenomena," published in Part xli. of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,* 1901) : —

"I have kept my mind steadily and only on the question whether some theory could not explain away the facts rather than accept spiritism. But I think that everyone without exception would admit that, superficially at least, the phenomena represent a good case for spiritism as a rational possibility. . . .

"I am satisfied if the evidence forces us in our rational moods to tolerate the spiritistic theory as rationally possible and respectable, as against stretching telepathy and its adjuncts into infinity and omniscience."

Professor William James, Harvard University, U.S.A. (from his presidential address delivered before the Society for Psychical Research, in June, 1896: —

"For me the thunderbolt has fallen, and the orthodox belief has not merely had its presumptions weakened, but the truth itself of the belief is decisively overthrown. If you will let me use the language of the professional logic-shop, a universal proposition can be made untrue by a particular instance. If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you mustn't seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white. My own white crow is Mrs. Piper. In the trances of this medium I cannot resist the conviction that knowledge appears which she has never gained by the ordinary waking use of her eyes and ears and wits. What the source of this knowledge may be I know not, and have not the glimmer of an explanatory suggestion to make, but from admitting the fact of such knowledge, I can see no escape. So when I turn to the rest of our evidence, ghosts and all, I cannot carry with me the irreversible negative bias of the rigorously scientific mind, with its presumption as to what the true order of nature ought to be. I feel as if, though the evidence be flimsy in spots, it may nevertheless collectively carry heavy weight. The rigorously scientific mind may, in truth, overreach itself. Science means, first of all,

a certain dispassionate method. To suppose that it means a certain set of results that one should pin one's faith upon and hug for ever, is sadly to mistake its genius, and degrades the scientific body to the status of a sect."

In the face of evidence so striking and abundant, and coming from such authoritative and unexpected quarters, it may confidently be asserted that any remaining scepticism as to the reality and objectivity of some of the phenomena under consideration, must either be ascribed to imperfect acquaintance with the subject or to that peculiar attitude of mind which, in so many persons, is constitutional and which is apt to resist the strongest evidence and the most overwhelming amount of human testimony.

Experience constantly teaches that there is a certain order of mind to which the acceptance of any apparently new truth presents very great difficulty, and to which the very notion of a preternatural world and preternatural action would seem to be an intellectual impossibility. Minds long and exclusively occupied with one particular line of study and investigation are sometimes known to lose the very power of conceiving of the possibility of truth lying anywhere outside the sphere of that particular line.

Such persons are very apt to complicate, if not to hinder, the pursuit of truth by obscuring and toning down the force and value of evidence, and by thus

preventing the ordinary inquirer from arriving at the actual facts of the case. We have ample illustration of this in the writings of some amateur psychical investigators who, while themselves unceasingly occupied with the subject, resort to a thousand ingenious devices with a view to mystifying their own minds and to thus escaping plain facts and incontrovertible scientific evidence. Others complicate the inquiry by the suggestion of absurd and grotesque theories infinitely more difficult of acceptance by the well-ordered mind than that which the facts themselves so clearly and manifestly indicate.

The statements of such persons should not, therefore, be weighed in the light of the conventional sceptical attitude of mind, but in that of the abundant evidence which, in the course of years, has come to hand, and which is based upon accurate and painstaking research conducted by men trained in habits of careful scientific observation. "The man who denies the phenomena of spiritism to-day," writes an experienced student of psychical research, "is not entitled to be called a sceptic; he is simply ignorant, and it would be a hopeless task to attempt to enlighten him."

The character and importance of this evidence is here so strongly insisted upon because it is felt that, in the present state of the inquiry, and with the

daily growing public interest in the subject, the interests of truth can best be served by a clear recognition and an intelligent understanding of *all* the facts which modern research has brought to light. It is the half or imperfect knowledge of the subject, the persistent hesitation of the mind to admit the action of independent intelligence in connection with some of the phenomena which, in the writer's experience, involve those perils, both moral and physical, of which we have hints in the works and statements of all really experienced modern students and investigators. It is well known that at the present time spiritistic experiments are increasingly being made a means of social amusement and entertainment, and are being privately resorted to by persons constitutionally and morally little fitted for such delicate and complicated operations. For them the dangers, fully admitted by expert investigators to attend the induction of the phenomena, even under the most favourable circumstances, are seriously increased if there be any doubt as to the nature of the cause or causes which are instrumental in producing them.

Indeed, the policy of silence respecting the matter, still advocated in certain quarters and with a view, no doubt, to avoiding conceivably greater dangers, can no longer be considered a wise and a safe one. The published results of the work of the Society for Psychical Research, and of individual

experimenters whose very names must be considered as a guarantee of good faith; the spread of popular spiritistic literature; the active propaganda now being made by all the English and foreign societies of spiritists, would in themselves render such a policy an ineffectual and impossible one.

Let it once be clearly and fully understood that, not abnormal mind-action, but extraneous spirit intelligence lies at the foundation and is the source of a very large proportion of those occult manifestions so fascinating to inquiring minds, and for many such inquiring minds the subject will at once assume a very different character, and considerations will present themselves which can scarcely fail to modify their entire attitude towards the matter.

It is therefore strongly urged that the evidence here adduced (a mere fragment of that which is available) be fully and carefully weighed and considered, that in the event of any lingering doubt presenting itself, the process by which such remarkable results were obtained be carefully studied in the original works of the respective investigators, and that no effort be made to escape the inevitable inference to which truth and fact compel the unbiased mind.

It will thus be found to be wholly impossible to escape the conclusion that a very large proportion of the phenomena commonly termed spiritistic are objective in character, that they are often directed

and controlled by intelligence, and that that intelligence is frequently one apart from and independent of the intelligence of any person or persons assisting at the experiment.

II

THE PHENOMENA

THE following classification of the phenomena given by Sir William Crookes in his book, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism,* will best serve our purpose in presenting to the reader a concise and comprehensive account of the results attained by recent psychical research: —

"I now proceed," writes Sir William, "to classify some of the phenomena which have come under my notice, proceeding from the simple to the more complex, etc. . . . With the exception of cases specially mentioned, the occurrences have taken place in my own house, in the light and without; private friends present besides the medium: —

"1. The movement of heavy bodies with contact but without mechanical exertion.

"2. The phenomena of percussive and other allied sounds.

"3. The alteration of weight of bodies.

"4. Movements of heavy substances when at a distance from the medium.

" 5. The rising of tables and chairs off the ground without contact with any person.

" 6. The levitation of human beings.

" 7. Movement of various small articles without contact with any person.

" 8. Luminous appearances.

" 9. The appearance of hands either self-luminous or visible by ordinary light.

" 10. Direct writing.

" 11. Phantom forms and faces."

To these must be added a series of phenomena which, while unattended by any external and independent manifestations, may nevertheless be considered as abnormal in character, since, in very many instances, they give evidence of the presence and action of independent controlling intelligence. These *subjective* phenomena may be classified as follows: —

Planchette and automatic writing.
Clairvoyance and clairaudience.
Trance oratory and speaking with tongues.

I. THE MOVEMENT OF HEAVY BODIES WITH CONTACT BUT WITHOUT MECHANICAL EXERTION.

This is in most instances the earliest phenomenon which takes place when a number of persons gather together for the purpose of holding what is commonly termed a " séance," and when they place their

hands upon an ordinary light table around which they are seated.

The phenomenon is generally ushered in by a sensation on the part of the investigators of cold air passing over their hands and faces and coming from the direction of one of their number, whom experience indicates as the "medium," or "psychic," or "sensitive," and who is found to be, throughout the experiment, the chief instrument in the evocation of the manifestations.

It is interesting to note that these breaths of cold air are perceived by persons often wholly ignorant of the subject, and in many instances assisting at such an experiment for the first time. The impression to them is generally that of a slight draught coming from a window in their opinion accidentally left open. The phenomenon has, however, nothing in common with the ordinary natural movement of the air, since experience has shown that a light object such as a thin piece of paper, exposed to its action, exhibits no perceptible motion of any kind.

As the experiment continues, perceptible movements of the table may, after a while, be observed. These movements are at first jerky and undecided in character and have all the appearance of being unconsciously produced by one of the sitters; but they become after a time more regular and definite and exhibit the operation of a force which would seem to work independently, and which cannot be

accounted for by any kind of action consciously or unconsciously exercised on the part of the members of the circle.

When this force is fully developed three or four strong adults, deliberately exercising all their physical strength, may be wholly unable to control it. Thus a table tilted up on one side and remaining suspended in that position, will withstand the combined attempt of several persons to bring it down to the ground. Under very favourable circumstances, and in the presence of a strong sensitive, a ponderous dining-room table on which many heavy objects have been placed, may thus rise up bodily in the air, and may remain suspended for some seconds, only gradually and without any injury to the articles upon it, resuming its normal position.

The sensation experienced by those in contact with the table is that of an extraordinary energy or force surging through it, and imparting to it a kind of vitality which would almost seem to transform it into a creature of life.

The same phenomenon may, of course, be evoked in connection with any other object such as a desk, a chair, or a box, placed in the room in which the experiment is being conducted, contact with it of the hands of the sensitive and of perhaps one or two of the sitters being the only condition necessary for inducing it.

While the force or energy displayed in the devel-

opment of this phenomenon has in its initial stages all the appearance of a blind and mechanical force, in some unknown way depending upon and issuing from the body of the sensitive and the sitters, there appear, after a certain time, and when a particular degree of "development" has been attained, unmistakable signs of the presence and action of an independent and controlling intelligence. This becomes apparent from the circumstance that, while both the sensitive and the sitters remain in a perfectly normal condition and entirely under observation, questions put by them in the audible voice are intelligently answered by a variety of movements of the table, specially suggested with a view to testing the reality and independence of the intelligence.

In very many instances, of course, and especially under unfavourable conditions, the phenomenon does not rise above the initial stage, leaving the impression on the minds of the investigators that the force exhibited is, if at present unknown and unaccounted for, nevertheless a natural and mechanical one, and that the action of independent intelligence in connection with it cannot be conceded. This has been the experience and is the verdict of even scientific inquirers who have not hesitated to give that verdict to the world. Such a conclusion, however, is based upon inaccurate knowledge and upon imperfect and superficial observation. All experienced psychic students are aware that it is often only

after repeated and prolonged sittings that the full development of the "psychic force" is obtained and that independent intelligence is exhibited in connection with it, and that in by far the larger number of instances that stage of the experiment is never reached at all. That it is, however, the ultimate issue of the experiment is now admitted by all patient and painstaking students who have devoted sufficient time to the observation of the phenomenon, and who have carried on their investigations with an open mind and in a systematic manner.

As will be seen later on, it is fully admitted that the mysterious force thus called into operation, in some unknown way issues from the physical organism of the sensitive and the sitters, and is in itself an unintelligent force. But it is with equal confidence asserted that when it is available in sufficient quantity, and is wholly detached from the physical organism, it can be, and beyond all doubt is, frequently manipulated by intelligence independent of and other than that of the psychic and the investigators assisting at the experiment.

II. THE PHENOMENA OF PERCUSSIVE AND OTHER ALLIED SOUNDS.

When the physical manifestations described in the preceding pages have reached a certain degree of what is technically termed "development," the

phenomenon is apt to pass into a further phase, and instead of the vibrations and tiltings of the table, clear percussive sounds, resembling the tapping of the wood by means of some solid object, such as a pencil, become perceptible. These sounds, being at first extremely faint and delicate, are apt, for some time, to entirely escape the attention of the inexperienced, being in most instances mistaken for creaks in the wood, produced apparently by unconscious muscular movements on the part of the sitters, or by the warmth and friction of the wood caused by the many hands in contact with the table.

But if the conditions are favourable, these delicate taps become louder and more distinct as the experiment continues, and in the course of time they are apt to assume so emphatic a form that there is no longer any possibility of ignoring or of mistaking them. But what is of still greater importance and significance is the circumstance, that they become distinctly intelligent in character — a means, in fact, by which questions put by the investigator can be answered, and by which information, in some instances wholly unknown to any person present, can be conveyed. This impression is most certainly left with every really fair-minded inquirer who has taken pains to subject the phenomenon to careful tests, and who has had opportunities of observing it under favourable conditions.

The independence of the intelligence directing these peculiar sounds has to be admitted for the following reasons: —

1. The sounds occur and are intelligent while the sensitive and all the members of the circle remain in an entirely normal condition, and perhaps adopt exceptional measures with a view to avoiding any kind of conscious or subconscious mind-action in connection with them.

2. The location of the sounds, their character and intensity, can be changed or modified at the suggestion of any one of the experimenters.

3. They can, in many instances, and at the request of the sitters, be elicited in other parts of the room, and away from the table on which the hands of the investigators are placed.

4. They are sometimes produced in objects suggested by the intelligence directing the sounds, and considered by all the investigators as the objects least likely to prove suitable for the purpose.

5. The sounds have a distinctly perceptible individuality. They are faint or loud, wooden or metallic, as the case may be, in order to thus distinguish between the different entities declared to be communicating by them, and this individuality is sometimes throughout the entire experiment a sustained and a consistent one.

6. The force manipulated for producing the

sounds can be employed experimentally and intelligently in a variety of ways, the signals agreed upon being given on the closed and locked keyboard of a piano, or on some other musical instrument happening to be in the room in which the investigation is being conducted.

7. There is, in many instances, a striking aptness and independence in the communications conveyed by these sounds, and this in cases where the conscious and subconscious minds of the sensitive and the sitters can be shown to have no conceivable connection with such communications.

III. THE ALTERATION OF WEIGHT OF BODIES.

On this point Sir William Crookes wrote, in the *Quarterly Journal of Science,* of October, 1871, as follows: —

"Before fitting up special apparatus for these experiments, I had seen, on five separate occasions, objects varying in weight from 25 to 100 lbs. temporarily influenced in such a manner that I, and others present, could with difficulty lift them from the floor. Wishing to ascertain whether this was a physical fact, or merely due to a variation in the power of our own strength under the influence of imagination, I tested with a weighing machine the phenomenon on two subsequent occasions, when I had an opportunity of meeting Mr. Home at the

house of a friend. On the first occasion the increase of weight was from 8 lbs. normally to 36 lbs., 48 lbs., and 46 lbs. in three successive experiments tried under strict scrutiny. On the second occasion, tried about a fortnight after, in the presence of other observers, I found the increase of weight to be from 8 lbs. to 23 lbs., 43 lbs., and 27 lbs., in three successive trials, varying the conditions. As I had the entire management of the above-mentioned experimental trials, employed an instrument of great accuracy, and took every care to exclude the possibility of the results being influenced by trickery, I was not unprepared for a satisfactory result when the fact was properly tested in my own laboratory."

IV. & V. MOVEMENTS OF HEAVY SUBSTANCES WHEN AT A DISTANCE FROM THE MEDIUM, AND THE RISING OF TABLES AND CHAIRS OFF THE GROUND WITHOUT CONTACT WITH ANY PERSON.

This phenomenon is but another phase of the physical manifestations already described in the preceding pages. It takes place when the sensitive is an exceptionally powerful one, or when he has passed through a certain process of "development," or is assisted by an exceptionally strong circle. A very large amount of the mysterious force referred to would then seem to be set free and to become available for an unusual display of physical power and

energy. Heavy objects and pieces of furniture, which the combined strength of several persons cannot move beyond one or two inches, may thus be shifted or "floated" with the greatest ease, grand pianos and ponderous dining-room sideboards may be made to change places, chairs with persons seated upon them may be raised to the ceiling and lowered again to the ground. And this may take place without any kind of physical and personal contact of the sensitive with these objects, without any wish or suggestion on his part, and not infrequently to the very great alarm and discomfiture of the persons present.

But here, too, there is clear evidence of independent intelligence operating in connection with the phenomenon, since there is an exhibition of complete and intelligent "control" of the force employed, little or no damage ever being done to the objects thus manipulated or to the living agents witnessing or eliciting it.

Were the force employed acting mechanically and without direction, and did it operate according to the laws governing other and possibly kindred powers of nature, the phenomenon could scarcely be supposed to take the form which it does, and the result would necessarily be a very different one. In many instances the manifestations described are displayed for the very purpose of effectively and conclusively demonstrating the presence of inde-

pendent intelligence and of its entire control of the mysterious force called into operation.

VI. THE LEVITATION OF HUMAN BEINGS.

"This," writes Sir William Crookes, "has occurred in my presence on four occasions in darkness; but . . . I will here only mention cases in which the deductions of reason were confirmed by the sense of sight. . . .

"On one occasion I witnessed a chair, with a lady sitting on it, rise several inches from the ground. On another occasion, to avoid the suspicion of this being in some way performed by herself, the lady knelt on the chair in such manner that its four feet were visible to us. It then rose about three inches, remained suspended for about ten seconds, and then slowly descended. . . .

"The most striking case of levitation which I have witnessed has been with Mr. Home. On three separate occasions have I seen him raised completely from the floor of the room. Once sitting in an easy-chair, once kneeling on his chair, and once standing up. On each occasion I had full opportunity of watching the occurrence as it was taking place. There are at least a hundred recorded instances of Mr. Home's rising from the ground, etc." [1]

[1] *Quarterly Journal of Science,* January, 1874.

The late Lord Lindsay wrote in July, 1871: —

"I may mention that on another occasion I was sitting with Mr. Home and Lord Adare and a cousin of his. During the sitting Mr. Home went into a trance, and in that state was carried out of the window in the room next to where we were, and was brought in at our window. The distance between the windows was about seven feet six inches, and there was not the slightest foothold between them, nor was there more than a twelve-inch projection to each window, which served as a ledge to put flowers on. We heard the window in the next room lifted up, and almost immediately after we saw Home floating in air outside our window."

VII. MOVEMENTS OF VARIOUS SMALL ARTICLES WITHOUT CONTACT WITH ANY PERSON.

This, too, is a very ordinary and well-known phenomenon which is apt to occur in the presence of a "developed" sensitive, and which has frequently been observed in the daylight and under conditions that can leave no shadow of doubt upon the mind of the percipient. Photographs, or small drawing-room ornaments have thus been seen to change their places, and articles kept in a room other than that occupied by the sensitive, have been brought through closed doors and deposited at a spot previously indicated — in some instances placed

into the hands of the person requesting the apport of the article.

Many such remarkable instances of apport and of matter passing through matter have been observed under the strictest possible test conditions, and will be found recorded in the late Leipzic professor Zoellner's deeply interesting work entitled *Transcendental Physics*. The writer has himself observed one instance of this kind in a private house, and under circumstances entirely precluding the possibility of deception.

There is, perhaps, no phenomenon which so distinctly exhibits the action of extraneous and independent intelligence as this one. Thus, not infrequently, will some object be apported in this manner with a view to setting up some train of thought or memory in the mind of one of the observers, and to leaving upon that mind the impression that the spirit of some deceased friend or relative is communicating. In some instances an article reposing in the pocket of one of the sitters will be mysteriously transferred to that of another, placed on the head or shoulder of one of the party, or concealed in some distant and perhaps inaccessible part of the room. A pencil may thus be suddenly seen to move, made to touch the ceiling, and to gradually descend again upon the table, finally placing itself into the hand of the sensitive, as an

indication that writing is to be given and that some kind of communication is to be made.

The author has observed instances in which the test conditions imposed by the investigators were augmented by the operating intelligences themselves, some additional and unexpected manifestation being introduced with a view to exhibiting the entire independence of the phenomenon and of the directing spirit intelligence, of both the sensitive and the sitters.

VIII. LUMINOUS APPEARANCES.

The term " spirit lights " is a very familiar one in occult literature. It is employed to designate a phenomenon which is frequently observed in the presence of a good sensitive, and which, of course, takes place when the séance is held in the dark. It is not easy to accurately describe it to any person who has not himself observed it, since the light referred to is unlike any other kind of light of which we have at present any knowledge. Sir William Crookes has tried to produce these lights artificially, but he has entirely failed to do so. The phenomenon resembles perhaps most closely that exhibited by the movements of a number of large glow-worms on a dark and still summer's night. If a dark room be imagined with a multitude of these wonderful little creatures rapidly passing from point

to point, now exhibiting the light, now obscuring it, occasionally settling upon an object and remaining stationary, and then again moving on, a fairly accurate impression will be obtained of the character of this very extraordinary phenomenon.

Under ordinary conditions, the size of these spirit lights is about that of a fairly large glow-worm; but with a really good sensitive, and under very favourable conditions, it may be very much larger. Sir William Crookes has observed one about the size of a turkey's egg which, he says, floated about for some time and then "struck the table with the sound of a hard solid body three times."

In some instances the appearance of these lights is followed by other similar manifestations in the shape of a luminous hand, the outline of a luminous face, or head, or body. Some of the phantom forms described under paragraph xi. are sometimes seen to carry one of these lights in their hands, and to pass it up and down their form with a view to making themselves distinctly visible to all the persons present. Paper, too, placed on a table around which a number of persons are seated with a view to eliciting the phenomenon known as "direct writing," may often be seen to become luminous, this generally taking place immediately before the success of the experiment, and being indicative of it. In some cases, as already pointed out, the light would appear to become solid, an audible sound

being produced upon its coming in contact with any piece of furniture or other hard substance.

No explanation can at present be suggested as to the source and character of these lights. In all probability they are but another form of that peculiar "force," apparently stored up in the human body, or at least in some human bodies, and capable, under certain conditions, of becoming detached from the organism and of being manipulated by intelligence. Scientific research may hereafter help us to better understand the phenomenon in its purely physical aspect.

The important point in connection with the treatment of the subject here is the circumstance that these "spirit lights" are unquestionably controlled and directed by independent intelligence. This is apparent from the very production of the phenomenon at the request of the investigators, all of whom, the sensitive included, remain frequently in an entirely normal condition and have no sort of connection with, or indeed knowledge of, the phenomenon and its cause. Indeed these spirit lights are often made to serve an intentionally intelligent purpose, appearing in some part of the room, specially indicated, or perhaps settling above or near the head of one of the sitters with a view to indicating the presence of some spirit intelligence to be more fully disclosed later on. Or they will flash out intelligent answers to questions put by a pre-arranged code of signals,

the light flashes taking the place of the tilts or raps already described in the earlier paragraphs. To persons who have had frequent opportunity of witnessing this phenomenon there cannot be, and scarcely is any doubt that, whatever the origin of the lights themselves, they are unquestionably under the control and direction of intelligence, that intelligence not that of any person assisting at the experiment.

X. DIRECT WRITING.

What is technically termed "direct writing," in contradistinction to "automatic" or "planchette" writing (which will be referred to hereafter), is frequently obtained in the presence of developed sensitives, and is generally looked upon in spiritistic circles as affording very striking proof of the action of independent and supernormal intelligence. This phenomenon has the further merit that, unlike most of the other mystic occurrences, it leaves tangible and permanent objective evidence behind it. It is consequently a phenomenon very much sought after by experimenters, but only very rarely and with very few sensitives obtained.

This writing simply makes its appearance on sheets of paper placed in the centre of a table, around which a number of persons and a strong sensitive are seated. The author himself has obtained it in fairly good light, the sitters being more than a foot

distant from the table, and remaining throughout the experiment under constant mutual observation. It appeared on paper previously marked and initialed, and taken from a newly bought and opened packet. But the mystic writing has also appeared on a piece of paper put into a closed and locked desk, on porcelain and other ordinary slates, on the wall or ceiling of the room in which the séance was being held.

A pencil or a small portion of the lead, about the size of a grain of wheat, is generally placed upon the paper selected for the purpose, although this too may be entirely dispensed with, the substance necessary for the production of the writing being, according to the statement of the intelligences, easily obtainable from any stray pencil that may happen to be in the house in which the experiment is being made.

When the pencil is used it is apt at first to move about the paper in a mysterious way, suggesting the attempt, on the part of an invisible hand, to seize hold of it: when "control" is fully established the writing will proceed in a regular and orderly way. At other times the pencil, together with the paper, will be suddenly snatched up, the sound of rapid writing will become audible, and after a few seconds, pencil and paper (the latter covered with writing) will drop onto the table. The writer has still in his possession several sheets of paper covered

with the mystic writing and obtained by him, many years ago, in a private house and without the assistance of a professional sensitive.

A certain luminosity of the paper, declared to be due to "spirit magnetism" and applied for the purpose of removing it from the sphere of the obstructive psychical emanations necessarily generated by the sitters, often becomes distinctly and simultaneously perceptible to all the sitters immediately before the success of the experiment.

There are about these specimens of "direct writing" several very unique and extraordinary features which, whatever the origin of the phenomenon, would certainly seem to mark them as distinctly abnormal in character.

1. The letters, although formed by pencil substance, are, in some instances, so minute that they can only be deciphered by the use of a magnifying glass.

2. The writing is sometimes marvellously beautiful and regular in character, the divisions between the lines being so accurately adhered to and the letters, however small, so perfectly formed, that no person, even with long practice, could possibly be supposed to execute it under the conditions indicated.

3. There is, at the back of the paper, no impres-

sion whatever of the pencil marks observable under all ordinary conditions.

4. Writing, sometimes occupying a whole sheet of note-paper, and containing well-formed and intelligent sentences, is frequently executed in a few seconds of time.

5. The writing is sometimes done on the inside or the bottom sheet of a packet of note-paper made up of, perhaps, six or seven sheets.

6. The handwriting of these "direct scripts" is, in many instances, wholly unlike that of any of the sitters, all of whom may have remained throughout the experiment in an entirely normal condition.

7. The communications conveyed by these means are often of a highly intelligent and apt character, directly bearing upon the purpose for which the experiment is being made, and leaving upon all the sitters the impression of the presence and action of independent intelligence, thoughtfully, and in very many instances most resourcefully, assisting at it.

XI. PHANTOM FORMS AND FACES.

The final link in the chain of physical phenomena known to modern occultism is the "materialisation" of apparently human forms and faces in such manner and under such conditions as to become objectively and simultaneously visible to all the persons assisting at the experiment.

This phenomenon is only obtained in the presence of a sensitive of exceptional power and "development," and while in a condition of deep trance or insensibility. This trance state is not induced by the deliberate hypnotic action of any person present, but it takes place naturally, some little time after the formation of the circle and after the creation of what is technically termed favourable or good "conditions."

In most instances the induction of the introductory stage of this trance state, to be more fully referred to hereafter, is attended by some extremely unpleasant and repulsive manifestations, the sensitive apparently enduring a great deal of pain and discomfort, and labouring under some kind of physical oppression. But these symptoms disappear after a time, the sensitive passing into a state of profound insensibility, and only by an occasional deep sigh or groan or a violent shaking and twisting of the body, giving indication of continued life.

When this stage of entire insensibility has been reached, and complete darkness of the room in which the experiment is being made has been secured, the phenomenon is apt to develop very rapidly. Hands, manifestly not belonging to any person in the room, or the dim outlines of faces or of human forms become visible, and gradually gain in solidity and clearness. In some instances the entire form, enveloped in what would seem to be a kind of light

drapery, is fully and immediately "materialised," moves about the room, speaks to the sitters in an audible whisper, and, after a time, "dematerialises" — melts away again before their eyes. The form apparently falls to pieces in a manner not unsimilar to what one may conceive the sudden melting of a large wax doll to be like, a mere fragment of its fabric, resembling a white cloud or vapour, remaining finally visible for a moment or two on the carpet or floor through which it would seem to pass. Sometimes the same form will, a second or two after this manifest dissolution, appear solidly reconstructed in some other part of the room in which the séance is being held.

The solidity and life-likeness of these forms would seem to depend very largely upon the sensitive and the sitters. If the conditions are very favourable they may have all the characteristics of real human beings with all the functions of a human body in full working order. The pulse or the heart may be felt to be beating, and the organs of sight or of speech or of hearing to be acting to perfection. If the "psychic force" available be only moderate in degree (which is more generally the case) the forms will be faint and have an ethereal and transparent appearance, an outstretched hand or foot of a sitter easily passing through them and the forms themselves remaining visible but for a very brief period of time.

In some instances, and especially in cases where the phenomenon is apt to be elicited frequently and systematically, the forms have been known to remain materialised for a considerable time, to have apported flowers and other light articles, to have carried on prolonged and interesting conversations, and to have acted in other respects like ordinary human beings, possessing and operating in an ordinary human body. Sometimes, as already mentioned, they will bring with them what they term their own light — a luminous kind of substance about the size of an egg. This they will pass over form and features, imparting to them a peculiar diaphanous brilliancy apt to produce a very striking effect in a dark room.

It should be explained that, according to the statements of the intelligences, the exclusion of the sunlight from the séance room is, in connection with this and similar phenomena, an unavoidable necessity; first, on account of the sensitive himself, and in order to ensure the best possible conditions; secondly, on account of the extremely delicate character of the phenomenon exhibited. It is maintained that the "psychic force" or substance, abstracted from the organism with a view to the building up of the spirit form, is highly sensitive to natural light, and that its detachment under such conditions would be certain to be attended by bodily injury to the sensitive. It is also asserted that, ex-

cept under very favourable conditions and in the presence of an unusually powerful medium and circle, the materialised forms could not be rendered visible in ordinary daylight.

It should be added, however, that trustworthy accounts are to hand which give particulars of materialisations having been obtained under such ordinary normal conditions and with sensitives whose powers had been systematically "developed" in the daylight from the very outset.

That there is, in the production of this phenomenon conclusive evidence of the action of extraneous and independent intelligence, abstracting from the organism of the sensitive (and possibly from other to us unknown sources) the necessary "psychic substance" and manipulating it for the purpose of constructing these forms, can scarcely be doubted by those who have witnessed the phenomenon under really favourable conditions and who approach the study of the subject in a fair and unbiased frame of mind. This delicate phenomenon, it must be remembered, only takes place under exceptionally good conditions, and is subject to a variety of fluctuations, largely depending upon the elements composing the circle, and upon other circumstances which need not be mentioned here. For many spiritualists, too, thoroughly convinced that they are thus in constant living intercourse with their departed friends and relatives, the phenomenon has a

distinctly religious and personal aspect, and they are apt, in consequence, to jealously guard the manifestations from the intrusive gaze of strangers and experimenters, and only under the most exceptional circumstances to allow outsiders to be present. It therefore becomes more than probable that many, if not most, of our modern writers on psychical subjects have never themselves observed the phenomenon concerning which they argue so plausibly and have so many learned things to say. As to the independence and separateness of these forms the testimony of Sir William Crookes ought to be sufficient for intelligent persons. In his *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* he writes: —

" Raising the lamp (a phosphorus lamp) I looked round and saw Katie (the spirit form) standing close behind Miss Cook (the sensitive). She was robed in flowing white drapery, as we had seen her previously during the séance. Holding one of Miss Cook's hands in mine, and still kneeling, I passed the lamp up and down so as to illuminate Katie's whole figure and satisfy myself thoroughly that I was really looking at the veritable Katie whom I had clasped in my arms a few minutes before and not at the phantasm of a disordered brain. She did not speak, but moved her head and smiled in recognition. *Three separate times did I carefully examine Miss Cook crouching before me, to be sure that the hand I held was that of a living woman, and*

three separate times did I turn the lamp to Katie and examine her with steadfast scrutiny until I had no doubt whatever of her objective reality."

The entire independence and objectivity of these forms is further proved by photographic record. Pictures exhibiting both the form of the sensitive and that of the materialised entity, have been obtained by means of magnesium light and, more recently, under quite ordinary conditions, by daylight, on plates previously marked and kept under close observation throughout the experiment. In this latter case the forms may not, of course, become visible to the normal sight; they are, however, often accurately described by clairvoyants before the exposure is made. The writer has himself obtained many striking pictures of this character, under good test conditions and attended by circumstances yielding unique and exceptionally valuable evidence.

An interesting feature about these "semi-materialised" beings is that, although invisible to the normal sight, they appear to be capable of catching the sound of the audible human voice, of thoroughly understanding the aim and purpose of any experiment that may be suggested, and, in many instances, of themselves and at their own initiative, introducing into it elements that go to demonstrate their own independent and objective existence.

The doubts apparently still lingering in the minds

of some psychical students as to the genuineness of some of these abnormal photographs count for very little, seeing that so very few of them can have had opportunities of making the experiment under really favourable conditions, and that the phenomenon of "materialisation" itself is such an exceedingly rare and fugitive one. The evidence in favour of some of these psychic pictures is as good as it is ever likely to be, and respecting some of those obtained by the present writer, expert photographic authorities have expressed their verdict. Sir William Crookes has obtained them in his own house under personally imposed conditions, and many private experimenters in different parts of the world have been equally successful.

"What are termed spirit photographs," wrote Professor A. R. Wallace some years ago [1]— "the appearance on a photographic plate of other figures besides those of the sitters, often those of deceased friends of the sitters — have now been known for more than twenty years. Many competent observers have tried experiments successfully; but the facts seemed too extraordinary to carry conviction to any but the experimenters themselves, and any allusion to the matter has usually been met with a smile of incredulity or a confident assertion of imposture. It mattered not that most of the witnesses were experienced photographers who took precautions

[1] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism.*

which rendered it absolutely impossible that they were imposed upon. The most incredible suppositions were put forth by those who had only ignorance and incredulity to qualify them as judges in order to show that deception was possible. And now we have another competent witness, Mr. Traill Taylor, for many years editor of the *British Journal of Photography,* who, taking every precaution that his lifelong experience could suggest, yet obtained on his plates figures which, so far as normal photography is concerned, ought not to have been there."

It is, unfortunately, not always possible to present the evidence in favour of the display of independent intelligence in connection with the phenomenon of materialisation in such a form as to compel the belief of the uninitiated or of the mere casual observer; but that belief is almost always created in the minds of those who have themselves repeatedly witnessed and studied the phenomenon. These materialised entities will, in many instances, do things wholly contrary to all expectation and suggestion. They will propose experiments which never entered the minds of the investigators and which would seem to them difficult, if not impossible, of execution. They will display a sharpness and intelligence and ingenuity which often leave the student in a perfect maze of perplexity and bewilderment, and which would seem to preclude the very

possibility of accounting for the phenomenon on purely natural and normal and subjective grounds. Indeed, such an explanation would suggest problems and difficulties greater by far than those attending the acceptance of the simple spirit hypothesis.

The universal testimony of these materialised beings is that they are the spirits of departed men and women, some of whom have learnt the art of manipulating the delicate matter abstracted from the organism of a sensitive, and of shaping it into bodies resembling those of their past earth life, and that they do this for the purpose of giving evidence that they have survived the shock of death and are able, under favourable conditions, to once more enter into communion with the living.

They further declare that this process of materialisation is an exceedingly difficult and complex one, requiring much practice and experience on their own part, and entire co-operation, in the shape of passivity, on the part of the sensitive. They also insist that, inasmuch as the substance of the form is taken from the sensitive, it will, in most instances, and especially in first materialisations, bear a resemblance to the sensitive's own form and features, the suspicion of fraud on the latter's part, being a natural and very frequent consequence. This resemblance to the sensitive only disappears, they explain, as the experiment is repeated, as the controlling intelligence better learns the art of manipulating the

"substance," and in proportion as it is able to recall to its memory the picture of the form which it once inhabited in its past earth life. And this explanation certainly must be admitted to be entirely in keeping with the circumstances which have been found to attend the development of this peculiar phenomenon.

There is, however, abundant evidence to show that the intelligences manipulating the delicate psychic substance are capable of moulding it into *any* shape or form, according to the thought-pictures of a deceased relative that may be in the mind of one of the sitters or of the psychic, or that may in other unknown ways be within their reach. This aspect of the subject will receive further and fuller treatment in another portion of this volume.

SUBJECTIVE PHENOMENA

There is a series of occult phenomena to which this designation may be given in order to distinguish them from those distinctly external and objective manifestations of which a brief description has been given in the preceding section.

They are subjective in the sense that, while in the phenomena just described, the operating intelligence would seem to be acting *outside* the bodily organism of the sensitive, the operations are here carried on from *within,* the mind of the sensitive being con-

trolled and influenced in such a way as to become the means of conveying, in a quite natural and automatic manner, independent spirit communications.

It is not here contended that these subjective manifestations are *in every case* due to extraneous and independent "spirit-control." On the contrary, it is emphatically asserted that in very many instances the apparent "control" is due to an abnormal action of the sensitive's own mind, a phenomenon very apt to be induced by a frequent repetition of the experiment, and in some cases very closely resembling the independent phenomenon. A fuller treatment of this aspect of the subject will be found on page 88.

There can be very little doubt, however, that the purely natural automatic action develops frequently into a stage at which, by reason of increased mind-passivity, independent spirit-control takes place, and at which the peculiar mental condition thus cultivated is made to serve the purposes of outside and extraneous intelligence. This change in the nature and character of the phenomenon generally becomes apparent from the character and tenour of the communications which are being conveyed by this means and it may be so gradual and subtle and imperceptible that it may be extremely difficult for the inexperienced to determine where natural automatic action ceases and independent spirit-action begins. There are instances in which both are in operation at the same time or where the one is incessantly alter-

nating with the other. Much depends upon the frequency with which the experiment is resorted to, much upon the state of the health of the sensitive, all upon the extent to which mind-passivity has been cultivated.

Without here entering upon the question of how far a certain degree of clairvoyance and clairaudience may be considered an extension of natural faculty, or perhaps manifestations of abnormal brain and nerve conditions at present but very imperfectly understood, experience teaches constantly that both are apt to make their appearance in persons who have, by frequently repeated experiments, passed through certain stages of "development" and who have consciously or unconsciously cultivated an habitually passive state of the mind. Such persons will, in the course of time, and while remaining in an apparently normal condition, begin to hear sounds and see things which are not perceptible to the ordinary mind and intelligence, and it is from the extraordinary character of some of these abnormal sights and sounds that we must conclude that they are not always hallucinations of a morbid or partially disordered brain.

A "developed" sensitive will thus correctly describe objects placed in some hidden part of another house or locality. He will give an accurate account of scenes and events occurring at a distance. He will read writing folded up and enclosed in an

opaque envelope. Or, if exceptionally strong, he will develop yet another degree of psychic faculty. He will "psychometrise," as it is technically termed, some article placed in his hand — that is, he will from contact with it, construct its entire past history, its mode of manufacture and the persons concerned with it past and present, and become conscious of certain influences, good, evil, or indifferent, that may adhere to it and that may, to his sensitive perception, emanate from it.

Or the sensitive may become clairaudient, may begin to hear sounds, generally those of the human voice speaking to him in a whisper or undertone, and these voices may have characteristics of their own, enabling him in the course of time, to distinguish distinct individualities and, by a certain mental process of his own, to hold prolonged and intelligent conversations with them.

Or these subjective phenomena may develop in the direction of "trance oratory" or of "speaking with tongues." Where this is the case the sensitive would seem to pass into a state of semi-consciousness, easily induced after frequent and prolonged practice, and in proportion to the degree of mind-passivity attained by him, exhibit evidence of supernormal powers and of independent and extraneous spirit-action. In this state the sensitive, although perhaps a person of little education and intellectually very poorly equipped, will discourse connectedly

and even brilliantly on some abstruse subject on which he could not possibly have gained any intelligent knowledge in the ordinary way. He will exhibit marvellous powers of argument, of repartee, of deep insight into human character, and display all the gifts ordinarily associated with a well-trained, disciplined, and in every sense superior human intellect. In most instances, of course, the information or knowledge thus displayed and intelligently presented does not transcend the intellectual sphere in which the sensitive habitually moves, and subconscious mind-action, now so much better understood, may account for and explain the entire phenomenon. All experienced occultists, however, agree that this does not cover the whole ground, and that occasionally at least, knowledge is conveyed and information given which could not by any possible stretch of the imagination have been normally acquired or been absorbed by either the conscious or the subconscious mind of the sensitive. And, unless we adopt the infinitely more cumbrous and inconceivable theory of unconscious telepathic intercourse between the minds of the sensitive and those of the living and the dead, a thing which has never been experimentally proved, we are driven to the conclusion that, in this phenomenon too, extraneous spirit-intelligence is occasionally acting and a certain form of spirit-possession is taking place. This is perhaps most marked in those cases in which the sensitive

suddenly speaks in a language which he could not have normally acquired, of which fragments even could not have been incidentally heard by him and perhaps absorbed by the subconscious mind, but which he nevertheless uses in an apt and intelligent way.

There are other subjective forms of psychic development to which reference need not be made here, since they may all be accounted for by the action of the subconscious mind, and have no direct bearing upon the problem here under consideration.

Amongst orthodox psychologists many of the subjective phenomena here described are unfortunately still regarded as symptomatic of certain forms of mental aberration, and many an unfortunate sensitive only too frequently still finds his way into the lunatic asylum. But there are everywhere increasing signs that in this sphere of research great reactions and transformations of ideas are at hand, and that saner and more rational methods of treatment will prevail before long. It must be clear that, admitting the presence and action of extraneous spirit intelligence, facilitated by the development of a peculiarly receptive and passive mind state, the atmosphere of a madhouse is the very worst environment amidst which a sensitive could possibly be placed, and that a mistaken and antiquated diagnosis of his case is bound to aggravate his condition, and to practically make his case a hopeless one. It is

probably true that in cases in which the sensitive has reached a very high degree of "development," and in which the subconscious mind would seem to have passed beyond the control of the healthy normal self, thus throwing him permanently and constantly open to invasion and control from the supernormal world, the mental equilibrium is never wholly restored, and the sensitive remains permanently and hopelessly insane. These, however, are exceptional cases. In most instances an intelligent knowledge of the origin and character of the phenomenon, and a treatment based on such knowledge and consistently carried out, will be found effective in securing a rapid and permanent cure.

III

THE SENSITIVE

IN the preceding paragraphs some light has already incidentally been thrown upon the relation in which the sensitive stands to the phenomena.

He serves, roughly speaking, as a link between the world of spirit and that of matter, and supplies from his nerve organism that substance, or "psychic force" (as Sir William Crookes terms it), which enables a spirit intelligence to manifest itself in the world of sense. To thoroughly understand the *modus operandi* employed in the induction of a spirit manifestation is to understand the use and need of the sensitive. It is claimed that the spiritual intelligence is there, that it is both able and willing to communicate with incarnate intelligence, but that it is hindered from doing so by the conditions which govern its state. It has no material body wherewith to make itself seen and felt. It can only, as the theosophists put it, "function on the astral plane." There is, however, in incarnate man, a kind of vital force, or nerve substance, material in its nature, and yet more ethereal and refined than the gross matter composing the physical body, and

this refined matter can be so manipulated by the spirit-intelligence as to cause perceptible impressions, of various kinds, in the material world, and to exhibit a variety of other independent and objective manifestations. It may, under certain conditions, be abstracted from persons peculiarly constituted and prepared to undergo a process of spirit-manipulation and "development," and it is readily yielded when such persons are in a condition of mental and physical passivity — shut away, as it were, from the ordinary life and environments of the world of sense. It is most abundantly set free in the state of trance and of entire insensibility.

"Under certain conditions," writes Professor A. R. Wallace,[1] "disembodied spirit is able to form for itself a visible body out of the emanation from living bodies in proper magnetic relation to itself; and under certain still more favourable conditions, this body can be made tangible. Thus all the phenomena of mediumship take place. Gravity is overcome by a form of life-magnetism, induced between the spirit and the medium: visible heads or visible bodies are produced, which sometimes write, or draw, or even speak. Thus departed friends come to communicate with those still living, so at the moment of death the spirit appears visibly and sometimes tangibly to the loved ones in a distant land. All these phenomena would take place far more frequently

[1] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, pp. 199, 110.

were the conditions that alone render communication possible more general or more cultivated."

That this is really the *modus operandi* employed in the elicitation of spirit manifestations, is evident from the unanimous statements of the intelligences themselves, and also from certain physical tests and experiments. The intelligences will, for instance, fix upon some person who, in their opinion, is best qualified to become a useful sensitive. They will give intelligent and elaborate instructions as to the best method of "developing" his psychic force. This has reference, not merely to the mode in which the experiments are to be conducted, but to the daily life and doings of the sensitive himself, involving sometimes the most minute directions as to food, air, general environment, etc. They will, to put it briefly, carry on a consistent and systematic training or education, teaching the sensitive how to part with the largest possible amount of psychic force with the least possible loss of vital strength and energy, and how to become in other respects a pliable and efficient medium or instrument in their hands.

And the care thus exercised will be a constant and a watchful one. The intelligences will, for instance, exclude from a proposed experiment any individual, in their opinion likely to injuriously affect the sensitive; they will arrange all the condi-

tions under which the experiment is to be conducted, and they will sometimes terminate it abruptly or suggest periods of repose if the expenditure of force seems to them to be too great a strain upon the sensitive's mental or nervous organism. And this constant watchful care would seem to indicate an accurate knowledge on their part of the nature and source of the peculiar power thus placed at their disposal, and of the conditions under which it may most effectually and at the same time most economically be expended and manipulated. Thus we read in one of Dr. Hodgson's reports on the "Trance Phenomena of Mrs. Piper," printed in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research:* —

"Imperator (a spirit-intelligence) claimed that the indiscriminate experimenting with Mrs. Piper's organism should stop, that it was a 'battered and worn' machine; that he, with his assistants (Rector and Doctor) should repair it as far as possible and that in the meantime other persons must be kept away."

The late Mr. Stainton-Moses (M.A. Oxon.), at one time a clergyman of the Church of England and in later years one of the most remarkable and powerful sensitives known in the history of modern spiritism, on one occasion received the following message from his spirit guides: —

"Be wary of the future for many reasons. Your greater development, which is rapid and progressive, will render you more and more amenable to spiritual influence of all kinds. Such spirits (undeveloped) will approach you, and by sitting you facilitate their entry to your circle. . . . Try to bring to the circle a patient and passive mind." [1]

But there are other reasons for believing that the *modus operandi* indicated is really the process which is employed in the elicitation of modern spirit manifestations.

There is, in the first place, the photographic evidence, which is of a striking and certainly uniform character. In recent times remarkable results have been obtained by the employment of the camera in connection with occult research and the importance and value of these results cannot be too highly estimated by those who have accurate and intimate acquaintance with the subject.

All really experienced investigators know that, in the presence of certain sensitives and under favourable conditions, photographs of materialised forms can be and have been obtained under circumstances that can leave no doubt on any reasonable mind. But what is perhaps of still greater importance in this connection is the record of the *progressive evolution* of these forms which some of these photo-

[1] *Spirit Teaching*, p. 164.

graphs exhibit in a very striking degree. White masses of material, surrounding and in some instances entirely enveloping and concealing the sitters, may thus be traced in various stages of development, manifestly aiming at, and in some instances culminating ultimately in, the formation of a shape resembling the human form.

When the sensitive is a strong one, and all the conditions are favourable, such a distinctly human form is thus finally obtained on the photographic plate; when the sensitive is, on the other hand, but an indifferent one, and the conditions are unfavourable, the experiment is rendered abortive, and the psychic substance remains a mere unshapely mass, with some little approach perhaps here and there to the outline of a human form or face.

But these abortive experiments are perhaps in some respects of higher evidential value than the successful ones, since they go to show that the accepted spiritistic notion respecting the existence of the psychic substance and its manipulation by independent intelligence is a correct one, and that it must be accepted as a working principle if correct ideas are to be formed as to the origin and character of the phenomena.

There is, in the second place, the evidence obtained from the variation in the *weight* of the sensitive before and after materialisation. The writer cannot speak from personal experience on this point,

but in the literature of modern English and foreign spiritism there are many references to this extraordinary phenomenon which, in some instances, would seem to have been observed under good test conditions. He is under the impression that it has been studied in the case of the medium Home, and that Sir William Crookes has experimented in this direction. Of the medium Eglinton it is asserted that, during a successful materialisation, his clothes seemed to merely hang upon his body, and that they appeared to be quite a size too large for him.

We have further proof of the correctness of the spiritistic theory respecting the origin of the phenomena in the symptoms universally known and admitted to attend the withdrawal of the psychic substance from the sensitive. These symptoms could scarcely be conceived to result from hallucination or auto-suggestion, or from natural nerve or brain fatigue, seeing that they sometimes continue for days and weeks, and that in many instances they seriously and permanently affect the constitution of the sensitive.

What this psychic substance which can thus be extracted and manipulated by intelligence precisely is, from what portion of the body it is chiefly withdrawn, what other elements are superadded to it, we have no means whatever of determining. Experience would seem to point to the brain as the organ from which the largest contribution is apt to

be exacted. Most sensitives suffer from brain exhaustion, and sometimes from a severe and irritating pain at the top of the spine after a prolonged and successful experiment, and almost all professional sensitives undergo, in the course of time, a gradual but very perceptible diminution of mental and physical vigour. Many of them suffer from chronic prostration and nerve debility, and it is with a view to moderating the demand made upon the nervous organism that the familiar "circle" is constructed, and that every effort is made to establish what is termed favourable or harmonious "conditions." Such conditions, *i.e.* the presence of persons thoroughly in sympathy with spiritistic aims and with the sensitive, and, by a passive attitude of mind and of body, contributing their share to the psychic substance required for the elicitation of the phenomena, would seem to insure the least amount of injury to the sensitive and the largest amount of success as regards the experiment.

That there is, however, in the induction of the objective phenomena, and under the most favourable circumstances, a serious drain upon the vital powers of both sensitive and sitters, would seem to be conclusively established from the universal testimony of experienced spiritists and from that of modern scientific students of the subject.

In the writings of Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and for many years

chief engineer of the Electric and International Telegraph Company, we find the following: —

"One of the phenomena which I experienced on this occasion was *a great loss of power.* I could with difficulty only support myself. I often experience this at physical séances, and to such an extent that for years I have been obliged to abstain from them altogether."

Speaking of the effect of the phenomenon of "automatic writing," Mr. Stainton-Moses wrote[1]:

"The hand tingled and the arm throbbed, and I was conscious of waves of force surging through me. When the message was done I was prostrate with exhaustion, and suffered from a violent headache at the base of the brain. Asking the cause, they (the spirits) said: 'Headache was result of intensity of the power and the rapidity with which it was withdrawn from you. We could not write on such a subject without displaying eagerness, for it is one of most vital concern to those to whom we are sent.'"

In "Extracts from Mr. Moses' Private Note-Book," published by Mr. Myers in vol. xxvii. of the *Proceedings,* we read the following:—

"Catharine (a spirit) knocked very clearly and

[1] *Spirit Teaching,* p. 22.

gave some messages. At length she rapped out: 'Look at the medium,' and 'Take care of the medium.' . . . After some time a light was struck, and I was discovered to have fallen down by the bookcase in a most awkward position and in a profound trance. My face was bathed for some time before any sign of revival showed, and then I could not stand, but slipped down in a helpless way. My legs could not support my body, and my hands could not hold anything. Dr. S —— walked home with me, and he says that I could not have walked at all alone."

Mr. D. D. Home, when giving evidence before a committee of the London Dialectical Society, said, in reply to the question, "What are your sensations when in a trance?": —

"I feel for two or three minutes in a dreamy state, and then I become quite dizzy, and then I lose all consciousness. When I awake I find my feet and limbs quite cold, and it is difficult to restore circulation. When told of what has taken place in the trance it is quite unpleasant to me, and I ask those present not to tell me at once when I awake."

In reply to a question as to the difference between manifestations in and out of trance Mr. Home replied: —

"In a trance I see spirits connected with persons

present. These spirits take possession of me; my voice is like theirs. I have a particularly mobile face, as you may see, and I sometimes take a sort of identity with the spirits who are in communication through me. I attribute the mobility of my face, which is not natural, to the spirits. I may say that I am exceedingly sick after elongations."

There are, it must be admitted, some cases on record in which a developed sensitive has exercised his abnormal powers for a long period of years without any apparent loss of physical stamina, and such cases are apt to be cited as illustrating the truth of the spiritistic contention that the exercise of mediumship is not necessarily attended by disastrous physical consequences: that it is to its abuse rather than to its use that they may in most cases be attributed. It is certain, however, that such instances are the exception and not the rule, and they may be accounted for by quite exceptional circumstances, which it is not easy to secure under the ordinary conditions of life, and which can never be secured in the case of professional sensitives.

When a person finds himself in easy material circumstances and possessed of a robust constitution, when he lives a careful and well-regulated life and is comparatively free from its common worries and fatigues, when he uses great care and discretion in the selection of the sitters and in the general conduct of the experiment, when long experience has

taught him how to husband the nervous energy expended and, by rest and food and change of air, to rapidly replace what has been lost, it is very probable that the risks to life and constitution are reduced to a minimum, and that health and strength may be preserved for a long period of years.

It is equally certain, however, that even under such exceptionally favourable conditions a drain upon the vital powers takes place, and that energy is expended which no amount of care will ever replace. This is evident from the statements of the intelligences themselves, who always readily admit that they can never entirely put back what they have abstracted from the organism, and also from the circumstance that such sensitives too will for months, and even years, suspend all their spiritistic experiments and will resist all attempt on the part of the intelligence to manifest and to enter into communication with them.

In the case of professional sensitives the fact is so transparent and so very generally known and admitted in spiritistic circles, that nothing further need be said on the subject. "As a rule I have," writes Professor Barrett, "observed the steady downward course of mediums who sit regularly."

Many of them, for this very reason, look upon themselves as willing martyrs in the cause of science and of truth; many ascribe their troubles to the senseless demands made upon them by an unreason-

ing public and by the misdirected zeal of enthusiastic but, in many instances, not very humane scientists.

As already pointed out, all the abnormal phenomena indicating the action of extraneous intelligence and, in the case of some of them, involving the abstraction of a certain nerve force from the organism of the sensitive, are most successfully induced while the sensitive is in a state of trance or complete insensibility. In most instances this state is induced after a prolonged and systematic process of "development"; but it has been known to occur after only two or three very ordinary experiments, and simply as a consequence of creating "favourable conditions." Under such favourable conditions the spirit-intelligence would seem to operate with the greatest possible freedom, and a developed sensitive would seem to become a mere passive agent in their hands. Thus when the sensitive and the sitters become conscious of the approach of the trance state, and perhaps give expression to some feeling of alarm or misgiving, assuring messages will at once be given to them, and it will be explained that complete unconsciousness will not only secure the success of the experiment, but also the entire well-being of the sensitive. "We are putting him to sleep because his mind is too active and we cannot work," or "we will take care of him, have no fear," are familiar instructions of this character, and it must be admitted that such intimations gen-

erally fit in with the circumstances of the case and intelligently explain many of the phenomena attending the experiment.

With most sensitives the spirit manifestations will develop easily and rapidly when the trance is deep and complete, while they will be broken and fitful and imperfect when it is only partial and superficial, or when the sensitive resists its induction by some mental action of his own. It is further a matter of common experience with all developed sensitives that the psychic force necessary for the production of the objective phenomena is withdrawn most easily, and with the least possible injury to health, while the sensitive is in a state of complete insensibility. *Mind-passivity,* indeed, would seem to be the keynote of all spiritistic experiment, and the condition by which the spirit-world most effectively carries on its operations on the physical plane.

In what precise *way* the intelligences operate in order to bring about this complete insensibility which renders the sensitive an obedient instrument in their hands, can of course be a matter of conjecture and speculation only, but it seems probable that the method adopted by them is not unlike the hypnotic one, and that the effect is chiefly produced by suggestion. The physical manifestations attending the induction of the trance state do not help us much in determining this matter. In the case of some

sensitives, and especially in that of those who have passed through a prolonged process of "development," it comes on easily and readily, and but few external symptoms can be recorded as attending it. It is in many respects similar to that of natural sleep, or of the ordinary hypnotic trance. In other sensitives, and especially in persons submitting to the process but occasionally, and perhaps not very willingly, both the induction of the state and recovery from it, are accompanied by some well-marked and in some instances certainly very repulsive manifestations. "Mrs. Piper's recovery from the trance state," writes a spectator, "was perhaps the most shocking sight I ever witnessed." "Gasps, peculiar rattling in the throat, face very much distorted," were, we are told by another, some of the physical accompaniments of the process. It can, of course, well be imagined that, admitting the existence of the operating spirit-intelligence, and its attempt, by means of the mind-passivity of the sensitive, to manifest itself, the phenomenon attending the operation would vary according to the general mental temperament of the sensitive and the degree in which he consciously or unconsciously assists or resists the operation.

The sensations experienced by the sensitive upon recovery from the trance state are described as similar to those attending the sudden awakening from an exceptionally profound natural sleep. He

feels dazed and confused and bewildered, and is incoherent in both thought and speech, and there is a general lethargic state of the mind which may continue for hours and even days. In most instances he has no knowledge whatever of what has taken place during the continuation of the trance, and expresses a keen desire to learn from the sitters what the character of the manifestations has been.

One very serious consequence, not often referred to in spiritistic writings, is apt to follow upon the habitual and systematic induction of the trance state. It is a tendency, on the part of the sensitive, to pass into it imperceptibly at all times and places and upon the smallest possible provocation — to entirely lose the power of exercising any kind of control over the phenomenon. A mere reference to the subject of spiritism, the reading of a book connected with it, the incidental remark of a friend may bring it about, and may place the sensitive in a position of the greatest possible annoyance and inconvenience — not to mention those dangers of a moral character necessarily attending such a condition of helplessness and of loss of self-control. Indeed such a fully developed sensitive may, after a time, exhibit symptoms strongly indicative of what is known as possession or obsession, or at any rate of permanent abnormal will-control of some kind, and his condition may ultimately become a truly

miserable and pitiable one, in many instances terminating in complete mental and physical collapse, and not infrequently in the asylum.

In these cases the will, so long and so habitually held in abeyance or submitted to extraneous intelligence, would seem to entirely lose the power of acting and of asserting itself, the sensitive thus laying himself permanently open to impressions and control from the spirit-world.

The intellectual faculties too, may, in the same way and by the same process, become impaired after a time, and the sensitive, losing the power of co-ordinating his thoughts, and of accurately distinguishing the source from which they flow, may come to habitually act upon suggestions made either by the action of his own disordered subconscious mind, or by that of spirit-intelligences in rapport with him. In all these instances the sensitive would exhibit all the signs and symptoms commonly held to be symptomatic of mind-aberration and insanity.

The late Mr. Myers had, as is well known, devoted many years of patient study, under exceptionally favourable circumstances, to these various abnormal conditions of human personality, and had become fully convinced that, while in very many instances subjective mind-action must be admitted to explain the phenomenon, genuine and independent spirit-control most undoubtedly takes place in others.

In his recently published book [1] we read the following: —

"The claim, then, is, that the automatist (*i. e.* the medium who writes or speaks in an apparent state of trance), in the first place, falls into a trance, during which his spirit partially 'quits the body'; enters, at any rate, into a state in which the spiritual world is more or less open to its perception, and in which also — and this is the novelty — it so far ceases to occupy the organism as to leave room for an invading spirit to use it in somewhat the same fashion as its owner is accustomed to use it.

"The brain being thus left temporarily and partially uncontrolled, a disembodied spirit sometimes, but not always, succeeds in occupying it, and occupies it with varying degree of control. In some cases (Mrs. Piper) two or more spirits may simultaneously control different portions of the same organism.

"The controlling spirit proves his identity mainly by reproducing in speech or writing facts which belong to *his* memory and not to the automatist's memory. He may also give evidence of supernormal perception of other kinds.

"His manifestations may differ very considerably from the automatist's normal personality. Yet in

[1] *Human Personality.*

one sense it is a process of selection rather than of addition; the spirit selects what parts of the brain machinery he will use, but he cannot get out of that machinery more than it is constructed to perform. The spirit can, indeed, produce facts and names unknown to the automatist; but they must be, as a rule, such facts and names as the automatist could easily have repeated had they been known to him — not, for instance, mathematical formulæ or Chinese sentences, if the automatist is ignorant of mathematics or of Chinese.

"After a time the control gives way, and the automatist's spirit returns. The automatist, awakening, may or may not remember his experiences in the spiritual world during the trance. In some cases (Swedenborg) there is this memory of the spiritual world, but no possession of the organism by an external spirit. In others (Cahagnet's subject) there is utterance during the trance as to what is being discerned by the automatist, yet no memory thereof on waking. In others (Mrs. Piper) there is neither utterance as a rule, or, at least, no prolonged utterance, by the automatist's own spirit, nor subsequent memory; but there is writing or utterance during the trance by controlling spirits."

In vol. xxviii. p. 311 of the *Proceedings* a very interesting and graphic description is given of the sensations which are experienced in connection with

some of these subjective manifestations. A Mr. Charles Hill Tout writes: —

"After about half an hour I felt a strange sensation stealing over me. I seemed to be undergoing a change of personality. I seemed to have, as it were, stepped aside, and some other intelligence was now controlling my organism. I was merely a passive spectator interested in what was being done. My second self seemed to be a mother overflowing with feelings of maternal love and solicitude for someone. The very features of my face seemed to be changing, and I was distinctly conscious of assuming the look of a fond and devoted mother looking down upon her child. I even inwardly smiled as I thought how ridiculous I must be looking, but I made no effort to resist the impulse. I now felt I wanted to caress and console somebody, and the impulse was strong upon me to take my friend in my arms and to soothe and cheer him. I resisted the impulse for a time, but finally yielded to it. In doing so I had a distinct feeling of relationship to my friend. After a little time I became myself again. My friend was confident that I had been influenced by the spirit of his dead mother, as he had had a distinct impression of her presence at the time."

In view of occurrences and experiences of this

kind, and of the peculiar circumstances attending them, of which it is so difficult to give an accurate account to the outsider, it will be found to be no easy matter to set aside the spiritistic contention that the " subliminal mind " theory, even if stretched to its utmost limits, does not cover the whole ground, but that independent spirit-action must be admitted in connection with a certain proportion of them. And this most certainly applies to all the distinctly subjective manifestations, such as automatic writing, clairvoyance, and clairaudience, psychometry, speaking with tongues, etc. The spiritistic theory, at any rate — the passive mind of the sensitive acting in conjunction with extraneous spirit-intelligence, according to the degree of passivity attained and of consequent rapport established — provides us with the best and most adequate explanation of the perplexing phenomena which have been observed in connection with these manifestations. It is this theory alone which enables us to understand why it is that while a spirit-message is perhaps to a certain extent quite intelligible and consistent, and there are about it certain unmistakable signs of independent mind-action, there is nevertheless conjoined with it much that is indefinite, confusing, and perplexing; why a communication is clear, precise, and pointed to-day, and muddled, and disconnected, and wholly subconscious to-morrow; why the manifestations, pointing to in-

dependent spirit-control, are so much more conclusive with one sensitive than they are with another; and why, with some sensitives, there is no evidence for such independent action at all. It is manifestly at all times a question of "control," depending for its degree and completeness upon the mental and probably physical condition of the sensitive, and upon the extent to which mind-passivity has been practised and attained by him. Indeed, to the observant student the two factors, manifestly instrumental in the production of these phenomena, may be constantly observed to be in operation, and it is sometimes extremely difficult to determine where subconscious mind-action ceases and independent spirit-action begins. In some instances the natural would seem to be gradually and imperceptibly passing into the preternatural; in others subconscious mind-action is constantly alternating with spirit-action or perhaps remaining the dominant factor throughout the experiment.

And how strange and startling such subconscious mind-manifestations are sometimes apt to be is best known to those who are acquainted with the results of modern psychical and psychological research, and who have some knowledge of what the latent possibilities of the human mind are — what extraordinary powers and undreamt-of stores of information, subconsciously acquired, it has been shown to possess.

That the sensitive developing in this subjective direction is constantly exposing himself to dangers, greater even, in some respects, than those threatening the "physical medium," must surely become apparent from a consideration of the circumstances of the case. A person who has long and successfully practised mind-passivity, and who has by these means invited and facilitated subjective spirit intercourse, of necessity lays himself constantly open to the invasion of external intelligence and to a form of spirit-control which is apt to be most subtle and complex in its character, and of the operation of which he may himself remain unconscious for a considerable period of time. He may become the subject of suggestions, impulses, and promptings, wholly extraneous and foreign in their character, and yet having to him all the appearance of quite normal mind-action, and consequently impelling him to ready and implicit obedience. The writer cannot help feeling that it is here that many of the startling and incomprehensible occurrences so constantly reported in our daily newspapers find their legitimate explanation, and that the innumerable instances of apparently sudden mind-aberration have their origin. The frequency of them will be in proportion to the extent to which planchette and automatic writing and the mind-passivity which these necessitate are cultivated, and to which the invasion and control of unseen spirit-intelligences is

thus being facilitated. "Ten thousand people," wrote Dr. Forbes Winslow,[1] as far back as 1877, "are at the present time confined in lunatic asylums on account of having tampered with the supernatural."

It remains an undeniable fact, which increasing numbers of persons are at this present time discovering to their cost, that the door which by these various practices is apt to be so easily and readily opened, is not so easily and readily shut, and the probability is that, with developed sensitives and others habitually and systematically practising these things, that door remains permanently open.

In any case it is fully admitted by the majority of spiritists, and by most experienced investigators, that in proportion to the degree in which mind-passivity is practised and development is attained, do the phenomena exhibit the presence and action of independent spirit-intelligence, and do they show a tendency to pass beyond the control of the sensitive.

[1] *Spiritualistic Madness.*

IV

THE INTELLIGENCE OR INTELLIGENCES

FROM what has been said in the preceding chapters it will have become abundantly clear what the writer's personal standpoint is with respect to the phenomena under consideration and their cause and origin. An experience of many years, during which he has had opportunities of studying the subject under exceptionally favourable circumstances, and in various countries, has thoroughly convinced him that a certain proportion of them is due to the intervention of intelligence, and that that intelligence is of an independent and extraneous character.

It will also have been seen that this is, broadly speaking, the position taken up by a considerable number of experienced and scientific investigators.

The writer further shares the conviction expressed by Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, that "this belief will, at no distant date, be accepted by all truth-seeking inquirers." The evidence is, in his opinion, far too strong and many-sided to be resisted by the really fair and unbiased mind, or to be explained away by any one of those fantastic

theories which scientific ingenuity and imagination have suggested from time to time. The difficulties introduced by some of these theories are, for the most part, infinitely greater than those which they are propounded to solve.

The probability is that it is in many instances not really the weakness and insufficiency of the evidence at present available which "holds" the mind of the conventional scientist, and which leads him to perform these at times truly astonishing feats of mental gymnastics, but rather that well-known rationalistic temper and habit of thought which shrinks from tolerating the very notion of a spiritual world and of spiritual agencies and activities.

Many modern writers on psychical subjects, too, have themselves no actual experimental knowledge of the phenomena, and merely speak from what they have heard and read, or from what a rooted misgiving as to the credibility of any human testimony is only too apt to suggest to their minds. We may safely conclude that the attitude towards the subject taken up by Sir William Crookes, and taken up by him at a time when science was practically ignorant of it, and even discredited the very occurrence of the phenomena, will be the ultimate attitude of all educated thought when the subject is equally well known and understood.

The only theory, besides the spiritistic one, which may be said to occupy the field and to deserve any

serious consideration in the attempt to interpret the phenomena under examination, is the one which is based upon certain abnormal operations of the human mind, and which is now very generally known as *the subliminal mind theory.*

Psychical research has, in recent times, occupied itself very extensively with the problems presented by these mental operations, and the evidence which has been furnished has thrown a vast amount of light upon the subject. The human mind is, it appears, an infinitely more complex and mysterious organism than had hitherto been supposed, and, in certain abnormal states, it would seem to exhibit manifestations which have a very direct and vital bearing upon the problems here under consideration.

It is thus asserted by psychologists of the modern school that a variety of experiments have gone to show that there is going on beneath the threshold of our ordinary waking consciousness, a secondary and far more mysterious process of mind-action, and that this secondary process is, in many respects, entirely distinct from and independent of the primary one. Man, to put it briefly, and in the language of some recent writers, would seem to be possessed of two minds, each having its own particular sphere of operations, and performing its own particular and distinctive functions.

The terms at present employed in describing these mysterious processes of mind-action are, of course,

provisional and tentative terms only, and they may hereafter have to experience considerable modifications; but they are, no doubt, exceedingly useful and serviceable terms for accurately describing what experience and observation have so far shown to be actually taking place.

It was the late Mr. Frederick W. H. Myers who had made this particular sphere of psychical research his own, and it is the terminology adopted by him which has become the received and most popular one in psychical circles. For a fuller and critical study of the subject the reader is referred to Mr. Myers' interesting articles on "The Subliminal Consciousness," which were published in succeeding issues of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* in 1893. Mr. Myers' conclusions may be briefly summed up in his own words as follows: —

"It is . . . as it seems to me, in a field almost clear of hypothesis that I suggest my own view: that a stream of consciousness flows on within us at a level beneath the threshold of the ordinary waking life, and that this consciousness embraces unknown powers of which these hypnotic phenomena give us the first sample."

Or, to express it in the words of Dr. Milne Bramwell, a well-known authority on hypnotism: —

"It can be experimentally demonstrated, not only

that the hypnotised subject possesses a secondary consciousness which alternates with his primary one, but also that it is possible for the two to co-exist and to manifest different phenomena simultaneously."

In his well-known work, entitled *The Law of Psychic Phenomena,* Mr. T. Jay Hudson, an American writer, gives us the following definition of these two distinctive mind processes: —

"In general terms the difference between man's two minds may be stated as follows: —

"The objective (or supraliminal) mind takes cognisance of the objective world. Its media of observation are the five physical senses. It is the outgrowth of man's physical necessities. It is his guide in his struggle with his material environment. Its highest function is that of reasoning.

"The subjective (or subliminal) mind takes cognisance of its environments by means independent of the physical senses. It perceives by intuition. It is the seat of the emotions and the storehouse of memory. It performs its highest functions when the objective senses are in abeyance. In a word, it is that intelligence which makes itself manifest in a hypnotic subject when he is in a state of somnambulism. In this state many of the most wonderful feats of the subjective mind are performed. It sees without the use of the natural organs of vision; and in this, as in many other grades, or degrees, of

the hypnotic state, *it can be made,* apparently, to leave the body, and travel to distant lands and bring back intelligence, oftentimes of the most exact and truthful character. It also has the power to read the thoughts of others, even to the minutest details, to read the contents of sealed envelopes and of closed books, etc."

For practical purposes, and in view of the questions here under consideration, the essential principles of the subliminal mind theory may be briefly stated thus: —

There is in the mind of man, besides the ordinary and known process of thought, of reasoning, reflection, and memory, an inner, secondary, and vastly more complex process of mental operation incessantly at work. It is, in large measure, distinct from and independent of the normal one, and in all healthy and well-balanced minds, only occasionally gives indication of its existence.

By means of this secondary mental process, a system of mind registry, both accurate and permanent, is unceasingly in progress. It embraces the whole of our complex life. It includes every thought which has passed through the mind, every mental picture or impression received, every word spoken and every sound heard — anything and everything that has ever come within the sphere of either the conscious or the unconscious self. By this

merciless automatic registry, therefore, all the acts, words, and even thoughts of our past lives are accurately and indelibly recorded. All the things which we have heard, or learnt, or known, are preserved and stored up — each single item in the whole of our complex mental, moral, and intellectual history is made an ever-present and permanent fact.

Under ordinary and normal conditions this secondary mental process would appear to keep discrete, and to make itself known to us only by an occasional welling over of its vast material into the waking consciousness, and of there translating itself into some of those sudden and mysterious mental operations which are so frequently a source of wonder and perplexity to us.

In abnormal conditions of the mind, however, such as artificial sleep, hypnosis, the trance state, the existence and power of this secondary mental faculty would seem to become fully and demonstrably manifest, and to exhibit not only an entirely independent method of operation, but something, we are told, very much resembling a distinct and separate individuality.

Thus this secondary, subjective, or subliminal consciousness may not only display a vast amount of independent knowledge and information on a variety of subjects, but also the power of weaving and constructing that knowledge into a consistent whole, and of drawing from it conclusions and in-

ferences in some instances wholly at variance with those drawn from the same facts by the ordinary normal waking mind. There may, in fact, be shown to be between these two streams of consciousness vital differences of opinion on very many of the most important questions of human life, pointing to two distinct and, in many respects, independent methods of observation, of reasoning, and of inference.

In what precise way and to what extent these two processes of thought and of mind operation act upon each other, how far they supplement one another, in what measure the subconscious process enters into the construction of the conscious self, it would be obviously difficult, if not impossible, to say. Certain it is that this subliminal thought reservoir is, in all healthy and normally constituted individuals, under the constant control of the ordinary waking or "supraliminal" mind, and that it only "wells over," or manifests itself, when for some reason or other the powers of this ordinary waking mind are rendered inactive, and the will is held in abeyance.

To a certain extent this, of course, takes place in sleep, when, as we all know, thoughts and memories and scenes long forgotten are apt to pass before our mental vision, and when some of the most hidden things of our past lives once more come into view.

The subliminal consciousness also becomes active

and more or less "independent" in states of profound reverie and abstraction, when the ordinary waking mind is reduced to a condition of apathy or vacancy or passivity, and the processes of normal thought are suspended.

The blending or discreteness, as the case may be, of the two mental processes may also depend upon certain physical conditions, such as are caused by injury to the brain, by derangements and disorders of the nervous system, by prolonged mental strain and overwork.

The best evidence, however, in favour of the independence and discreteness of the subliminal mind-process is obtained in hypnosis. It is there, it would seem, that the powers and possibilities of this secondary stream of consciousness are most fully disclosed, and that the psychologist finds himself face to face with problems which recent research has as yet only very imperfectly solved. What has been very fully demonstrated is the exceeding sensitiveness and receptivity of the subliminal mind, its high susceptibility to suggestion both from within and from without. It would seem to be able, in response to such suggestion, to think things, to perform acts, and to play parts which may be wholly out of keeping with the general character and temperament of the subject, and with all the normal tendencies of his waking mind.

The conscious or supraliminal mind has never,

it would seem, a clear and accurate knowledge of the doings of the subliminal mind during the state of trance, any such impressions of what has taken place being, if retained at all, for the most part of a vague and shadowy and dream-like character.

But the subliminal consciousness has, it is asserted by some modern psychologists, yet another tendency or characteristic. It is apt, under certain abnormal conditions, to pose as an entity, wholly distinct and separate from the normal self, and by a casting of the knowledge at its disposal into dramatic form, to play the part of an extraneous and outside intelligence.

In spiritistic circles where the dominating thought is that of communion with the dead, and where this thought may be supposed to act as a suggestion to the mind of the sensitive, this part is apt to be that of some deceased friend or relative, respecting whom the mind may have an exceptional amount of information, and from whom a communication is particularly desired.

Experiment would further seem to indicate, we are told, that this subliminal consciousness may, under certain exceptionally favourable circumstances, come in telepathic contact with the minds of persons in psychical affinity or rapport with it, and may abstract from those minds, or perhaps passively receive from them, information or intelligence which it may manipulate in its own particular

way, and for the purpose of effectively completing its personation of the deceased personality.

We have here, then, it is claimed, all the material necessary for the constructing of a case in favour of a purely natural explanation of a vast mass of apparently independent and so-called spiritistic phenomena. They may be accounted for by the action of the subliminal consciousness, operating in obedience to suggestions received from spiritistic inquirers and in conjunction with the minds of the sitters, and producing, by a natural process of personation, all the appearance of independent and extraneous spirit-action.

This is the position held by a considerable number of psychical investigators at this present time, and even though it is fully acknowledged that, in the face of the known and constantly observed facts, this theory presents some very grave difficulties, and by no means covers the phenomena, it is adhered to on the ground that the powers and possibilities of the subliminal consciousness are as yet only very imperfectly known, and that further research and investigation may hereafter show them to be of an infinitely greater and more complex character than has been supposed.

It is not necessary, for the purposes of this book, that this theory should be examined in detail, or that the evidence upon which it is constructed should

be adduced. In a sphere of research where such vital and fundamental differences of opinion exist, where the opportunities for accurate and systematic research are so few and in so many instances limited to manifestly morbid mind-manifestations, and where so much that passes for fact must be dismissed as pure imagination or speculation, such a task would be a difficult, if not indeed a hopeless one. The subject, moreover, has been very fully and explicitly dealt with in the publications of the Society for Psychical Research and in many of the more recent books on Hypnotism and Occultism.

What should be noted, however, is the circumstance that some scientists of note by no means admit the contentions and theories of the modern school of psychical investigators, and that a certain proportion of them reject the subliminal mind theory and telepathy altogether. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace himself speaks of it as "a cumbrous and unintelligible hypothesis which only finds favour with those who have been accustomed to regard the belief in a spirit world as unscientific, unphilosophical, and superstitious," and Dr. Van Eeden declares that "he has found it difficult to theoretically contravene the opinion that neither telepathy nor clairvoyance exists as a personal faculty but that all is the work of spirits."

In his quite recently published work on *Hypnotism: Its History, Practice, and Theory,* Dr. Milne

Bramwell (probably the greatest modern authority on this subject) writes as to telepathy: —

"A small group — mainly comprised of men who had distinguished themselves in one or more branches of science — who claimed to have investigated the alleged phenomena by scientific methods, have asserted its existence. Amongst these may be cited the late Professor Henry Sidgwick, Frederick Myers, Edmund Gurney, and Dr. A. T. Myers. Although their experiments were carefully conducted, it is doubtful whether all possible sources of error were excluded; and I am unable to accept them as conclusive" (pp. 141–2).

Again, after giving several instances of the work of the Society, Dr. Bramwell says: —

"As already stated, although successful telepathic experiments were formerly reported by several members of the Society for Psychical Research, these have not been confirmed by later observers" (p. 469).

These three references alone will suffice to indicate how widely the best-informed minds differ on this subject, and how impossible it is, in this sphere of research, to adduce anything that may be regarded as incontestable and universally admitted fact, and upon which as a consequence a legitimate and rational argument may be constructed.

It is fully admitted, however, that in its more reasonable and moderate sense, the subliminal mind theory is finding increasing favour with psychical investigators, and that even though the terminology at present adopted be an unsatisfactory one and one scarcely commending itself to accurate thinkers, many of the facts which that terminology is designed to express can scarcely be disputed.

The main purpose of this book may, therefore, perhaps best be served by accepting the general principles of this theory, and by briefly inquiring how far it may reasonably be said to cover the abnormal psychical phenomena of which a description has been given, and a considerable portion of which are, in the writer's opinion, due to extraneous spirit-intelligence.

In the paragraph entitled "Subjective Phenomena" (p. 55), it has already been pointed out that there are many apparently independent spirit-manifestations which may, beyond doubt, be accounted for by natural automatic action, and that the subliminal consciousness, drawing upon the information lying latent in some portion of the complex mental organism of the sensitive, is the actual source from which many so-called spirit messages proceed. This would seem to apply to planchette and automatic writing, to some forms of clairvoyance and clairaudience, to trance-speaking and to what is termed in spiritistic circles psychometry. The probability is

that in many, if not in most of these manifestations, the subconscious mind of the sensitive is the sole agent in producing the phenomenon. This may, beyond all doubt, be said to be the case:

1. When the information or knowledge conveyed by these means can be shown not to transcend the knowledge possessed by the mind, sub and supra, of the sensitive.

2. When the general character and tone of the communications is found to correspond with the mental level, degree of education, and general moral, and intellectual attainment of the sensitive.

3. When there are indications that the subliminal consciousness of the sensitive, acting in obedience to suggestions received from members of the circle, is creating a personation in the form of some deceased individuality.

An incident of the kind constantly occurring at spiritistic séances may help to better explain this latter point.

A person possessed of some mediumistic power takes a pencil in his hand or places the tips of his fingers upon a planchette for the purpose of eliciting a spirit communication. The communication is given and it purports to be from, let us say, a deceased sister of the sensitive. This sister plays her part with amazing consistency and perfection. She gives accurate answers to questions as to her age, her name, the cause of her sickness, her death,

the circumstances attending her funeral. She makes correct references to other deceased or surviving relatives; she comments upon some perhaps obscure occurrence or incident in her own or their past history. She indulges in moral reflections upon the transitoriness of life, the certainty and awfulness of death, the life beyond the grave, of which her presence and communication give convincing and satisfactory evidence. She even volunteers information with a view to excluding the very possibility of subconscious mind-action on the part of the sensitive. In brief, she conveys to the sensitive, and to those assisting at the experiment, the impression of an independent living and acting personality.

But, unless there be evidence of an additional and very different character, there would manifestly be no valid reason for accepting such a condition, since, on the grounds of subconscious mind-action, the following process may be shown to be at work, and to adequately account for the phenomenon.

The sensitive starts with belief in the possibility of spirit communion, and with the intention of obtaining, if possible, a message from the dead. This thought acts as a powerful suggestion to the mind, rapidly passing into a state of passivity. The subliminal consciousness, beginning to take control, seizes hold of and assimilates this thought. It has hidden away in its storehouse a vast amount of

latent knowledge of the sensitive's friends and relatives, and it is, of course, fully aware of the fact that it is from a deceased sister that a communication is most earnestly desired — or it may be that it is of the sister that its information is most complete and accurate. With its natural tendency to dramatic personation it readily slips into the part of this sister, impersonates her with the aid of the knowledge at its disposal, and for the time being, and in consequence of suggestion, thoroughly identifies itself with her. It has access, of course, to the knowledge of the supraliminal mind, too, and, let us assume, to some knowledge in the minds of some of the sisters, and it is consequently able to play its part to perfection. Its answers to questions are startling and unexpected, and, being in a measure based upon information latent in the subliminal consciousness only and not remembered by the supraliminal mind, they have all the appearance of originality and independence. There is a reproduction even of the deceased sister's handwriting, her mode of expressing herself, her figures of speech, and her very signature. But the "sister" fails and becomes incoherent when a real test question is asked, when information is desired on any subject on which the deceased personality alone is known to have possessed accurate knowledge, when a systematic and deliberate attempt is made to obtain conclusive evidence of identity. It is then seen

that the phenomenon may conceivably be due to the abnormal mind-action of the sensitive, and that there is no good reason for assuming the presence and operation of an extraneous and independent spirit-intelligence (although, of course, there is always the possibility that this is actually the case, and that the limitations displayed are merely an indication of the fact that it is an intelligence which is personating the dead). The evidence for subconscious mind-action may perhaps be considered complete when the presence of some other "imaginary sister" is desired, and when the seemingly independent entity, acting on this suggestion, assumes the character of such a sister, and begins conveying messages from an individual which, as a matter of fact, has never existed.

It is conceded, then, that we have in this theory of the subliminal consciousness a means of accounting for a multitude of interesting and sometimes exceedingly perplexing phenomena without resorting to the notion of spirit presences and spirit operations, and when the marvellous powers and possibilities of these subconscious mental processes, as we find them recorded in modern books on Hypnotism, are fully borne in mind, we cannot certainly be surprised that some modern investigators have sought to find in this theory the clue to *all* the now known occult phenomena.

This would, however, as Dr. Hodgson, Professor

Hyslop, and other recent investigators have so conclusively shown in their exhaustive accounts of phenomena observed by them and published in the *Proceedings* of the Society, be stretching this theory to the breaking point, and, as already pointed out, would be introducing difficulties greater by far than those which the spiritistic theory in the wider sense presents. It is a theory which cannot possibly be made to cover the whole ground, and which becomes wholly inapplicable when the character of certain phenomena is examined and when the peculiar circumstances under which they sometimes occur are borne in mind.

In the writer's opinion (and indeed in that of some of the best and most experienced investigators) subliminal mind-action, even if all its supposed possibilities be admitted, is wholly inadequate to account for:—

1. The physical and objective phenomena which have been described, and the occurrence of which is now universally admitted.

It will have been observed that many of them take place while the sensitive remains in a normal condition and while he retains entire control of his organism and faculties — that it is by no means always a case, as Mr. Hudson seems to assume, of trance or of complete insensibility. The writer has observed a variety of independent objective mani-

festations, such as "direct writing," the apport of small objects, the playing of an instrument, the movement of furniture, the appearance of hands, etc., while the sensitive remained in an absolutely normal state, had himself so little acquaintance with the subject as not to know "what to expect," and throughout the experiment took part in the general conversation of the company assembled.

And there is surely not a fragment of evidence to show that even the "liberated" subliminal of the sensitive has the power to perform any one of these physical acts — to move chairs, to execute writing, to apport objects, to exhibit the many innumerable and in so many instances entirely unexpected objective performances, which in some instances are designed for the very purpose of proving the presence and operation of an independent spirit-intelligence. To boldly ascribe such manifestations to latent powers which the subliminal may conceivably be supposed to possess, without a fragment of evidence in support of such a supposition, is a mere clumsy attempt to evade an unwelcome conclusion and to beg the entire question at issue. Such suppositions are very apt to be made by persons who assume a very learned and scientific attitude, and who have no doubt heard and read much about the phenomena in question, but from whose every statement it is often only too apparent that they have never themselves observed them under really fa-

vourable conditions, and in the presence of good sensitives.

2. Again, subliminal mind-action does not cover phenomena by means of which information is conveyed or knowledge displayed which could not possibly be within reach of the minds of the sensitive or of the sitters, and the correctness of which is only ascertained upon subsequent inquiry. As all experienced psychical investigators are aware, and as the ample records of the Society's *Proceedings* so abundantly testify, communications conveying information of this kind are constantly received in spiritistic circles and through the agency of sensitives, and, unless we claim for the subliminal consciousness powers amounting to omniscience, we are compelled to resort to the theory of extraneous spirit-intelligence, by some means unknown to us gathering such information and transmitting it through the agency of the sensitive.

Professor Hyslop has recently made exhaustive inquiry into phenomena of this character, and his "Record of Observation of Certain Trance Phenomena," published in Part xli., vol. xvi. of the *Proceedings,* show how insurmountable the difficulties of the subliminal mind theory are when it is applied to some of these phenomena.

These difficulties may perhaps be best illustrated by adducing a case in point.

A stranger is introduced to a sensitive, who readily passes into a state of trance, and conveys a communication from a deceased relative of the stranger. The communication implies not only accurate knowledge on the part of the communicating intelligence of the stranger himself, his name and character and environments (all unknown to the sensitive normally), but also accurate knowledge of the stranger's relatives, living or dead, his relationship to them — occurrences and circumstances connecting their life with his. It refers to events long past and forgotten by the stranger, comments upon them in a reasonable and intelligent way, and throws light upon occurrences that had perhaps for years caused considerable perplexity to his mind. It discloses a fact not known to the stranger's mind, and only known to, perhaps, one other person living. It conveys a lot of other information respecting things past and present, and respecting individuals not personally known to the stranger, but known to this supposed deceased relative, and perhaps to other friends or relatives living in distant parts of the world.

There are, it may be, flaws and mistakes here and there invalidating the force of the evidence for identity, but they are admitted to be conceivably due to lapses of memory, or perhaps to the imperfect method of communication. The account on the whole is remarkable and striking; there is in it a

display of consistency and intelligence and of information that could not possibly be within reach of the minds, sub or supra, of the sensitive or of the stranger.

Now what powers of the subliminal consciousness of the sensitive would have to be postulated in order to cover a phenomenon of this kind?

(1) It would, in the first place, have to abstract from the mind, sub and supra, of the stranger all the information it may possess respecting the deceased relative. It would have to accomplish this while he remains in a normal condition, is critically watching the development of events, and is personally resisting any disposition of his mind to yield such information. It would have to construct the material obtained into a consistent whole and create the impersonation.

(2) It would, within a given time, have to pick out from amongst the myriads of human beings scattered throughout the world those individuals connected with the stranger who may possess the additional information which is required.

(3) It would have to establish rapport between itself and these various minds.

(4) It would have to abstract from them the particular information necessary for a consistent construction of the personality of the deceased relative.

(5) It would have to exercise, in the abstraction of this knowledge, a selective and discriminative faculty, taking that portion of the knowledge only which will serve its particular end.

(6) It would have to extract the knowledge accurately and at once, and while the mind of the person concerned is in a normal state and has no consciousness, and presumably no desire whatever of yielding it.

These are only some of the difficulties which are involved in contemplating a process of this kind, and they will be felt, by all rationally minded persons at least, to be insuperable, even if an unconscious telepathic mind-intercourse, of the kind required, could, on the ground of observation and experience, be considered possible and probable. But "it ought to be constantly borne in mind," writes Sir Oliver Lodge, "that this kind of thought-transference (the sensitive drawing upon the subliminal consciousness of living distant persons) without conscious active agency has never been experimentally proved." [1]

A recent contributor to the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (vol. xlv.), fully weighing and recognising the force of these overwhelming difficulties, writes as follows:—

"The only serious objections to this hypothesis

[1] *Proceedings*, vol. vi. p. 453.

(that the messages emanate from the medium's subliminal) are:

"(1) That if this were actually the case, one's brain would be the recipient of vibrations, not only from one's friends and relatives, but from every living being in the universe.

"(2) That, even granting that the facts are telepathically transmitted as suggested above, they would form an almost indescribable chaos, from which it would be almost impossible to select the right facts for the person thought of, thus making the medium's telepathic powers worse than useless; for, instead of an orderly array of thoughts, connected with some particular individual, and classified, to a certain extent, by some unknown association process, with his individuality, the medium's subliminal consciousness would find itself groping vaguely amidst a bewildering mass of evidential material, strewn helter-skelter throughout the sitter's subconsciousness."

A further grave difficulty clearly presents itself from the *moral* point of view. If subliminal mind-action and thought-transference of the kind indicated could be really shown to be taking place, if the subliminal consciousness of the sensitive could be shown to have the power of "tapping" the sub or supra liminal mind of any living near or distant person at its own will and without the conscious

intervention of such a person, the complex mind operations of mankind would practically be at its disposal, and there would cease to be a secret in the universe. Such a power, if it existed, would manifestly introduce the most terrible complications into our moral and social life, and would lead to a state of confusion and anarchy which it is difficult to conceive. No man's thoughts or ideas or knowledge could any longer be considered his own, and the entire world-order would be upset. It may be doubted whether those who so glibly, and often in such studiously learned terms, discourse of the powers of the subliminal mind and of the possibility of solving all occult problems by its means, have ever seriously contemplated the full weight of these overwhelming difficulties and really know what they are writing and talking about.

Another difficulty presented by the subliminal mind theory in its application to phenomena of this order lies in the curious circumstance that the communicating intelligence almost always claims to be that of some deceased person.

It will have been seen that where the spiritistic view in the narrower sense dominates the minds of the sitters, and where this view may be supposed to be acting by way of suggestion upon that of the sensitive, the phenomenon can be adequately accounted for. The subliminal consciousness, when liberated, has been shown to be strongly susceptible

to suggestions from without and of this character. But here, too, the theory does not cover the whole ground, and leaves a large portion of the mystery wholly unexplained. For it has been found that the communicating intelligence will claim to be that of the dead when no such suggestion can be said to emanate from the sensitive or the sitters, and indeed when the dominating mental attitude is that of utter scepticism as to the reality of the phenomenon, and certainly as to the action of the dead in connection with it. As a matter of fact, it is sometimes under these circumstances that exceptional pains are taken by the intelligences to demonstrate their entire independence of the sensitive and of the sitters, and that overwhelming evidence is adduced in favour of the truth of this assertion.

"The stupendous difficulty," writes Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, "that, if these phenomena and tests are to be all attributed to the 'second self,' then that second self is almost always a deceiving and lying self, however moral and truthful the visible and tangible first self may be, has, so far as I know, never been rationally explained."

In other words: Can this subliminal self, while replete with information never normally gathered, be supposed to be always under a chronic and profound delusion as to its own identity?

This brief inquiry into the character and powers of the intelligence displaying itself in connection with the occult phenomena under consideration will probably suffice to show how very strong the case in favour of independent spirit-action really is, and how overwhelming the difficulties of the subliminal mind theory are, even if all reasonable allowances be made and the theory be stretched to its utmost conceivable limits. The exhaustive inquiries into this aspect of the subject, conducted some years ago by Dr. Hodgson, and more recently by Professor Hyslop of Columbia University, and published in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,* are practically conclusive on this point, and they should be more than sufficient to remove any lingering doubt from the minds of all really fair-minded students of the subject whose eyes are not holden by prejudice, and who are prepared to welcome truth in whatever garb and from whatever quarter it may present itself.

That, in the opinion of the last-mentioned investigator, the spiritistic theory, while more adequately explaining the phenomena, also presents some very grave difficulties is a circumstance which should by no means be ignored or lightly passed over. On the contrary, it is one which should receive the most careful study and consideration, seeing that it is here that we are face to face with the real problem presented by this inquiry. For, in the writer's opin-

ion, the difficulties which the spiritistic theory presents to the purely scientific investigator is due to the circumstance that he conceives of this theory only in the narrower and conventional sense, and entirely fails to take into account the possibility that the intelligence, so frequently and manifestly operating in connection with these phenomena may, while independent and extraneous in character, be conceivably not that of the dead.

The assumption of such a possibility would no doubt, as the writer is fully aware, be out of keeping with scientific methods and habits of thought, and would perhaps introduce into the inquiry an element more properly belonging to the sphere of religion and to that of the theologian. The writer is however fully convinced that it is only the full recognition of this possibility, here and there already hinted at by some recent investigators, which will clear away the greatest of the remaining difficulties attending that inquiry, and which will furnish the true clue to the many perplexing problems at present still awaiting solution.

V

THE SPIRITISTIC THEORY

IN view of what has thus far been said, and of the direction in which most recent psychical research is so manifestly tending, it is now proposed to examine the spiritistic theory in detail, to weigh the evidence which may, in fairness, be urged both for and against it, and to consider whether that evidence may, as a whole, be legitimately held to warrant the conclusion that the spirits of the dead are the operating and communicating agents in connection with some of these phenomena.

The subject is admittedly one of surpassing interest and significance, and the questions which are involved in such an inquiry must be seen to be of a grave and far-reaching character. It is therefore necessary that we should bring to the inquiry an open and impartial mind, fully determined to survey not a portion only, but the whole of the field of fact and evidence which lies before it, and that we should allow neither personal predilections nor settled religious convictions to bias our judgment and to prejudice our verdict.

This state of mind is unfortunately not an easy

one to attain, and it is certainly not the one in which the subject is apt to be approached by the larger proportion of interested inquirers. Most of us are swayed by personal feelings and predispositions, by religious views tending in one direction or in the other, and it is often on the ground of such personal feelings, such *à priori* states of mind, rather than on the impartial examination of evidence, that our conclusions are apt to be formed. We are thus tempted to view the evidence from one point of view only, to lay undue stress upon one particular line of argument, while perhaps depreciating the force and cogency of another, and to blind our eyes to facts and circumstances which we instinctively feel to be destructive to the particular theory which we desire to see established.

Modern spiritistic literature supplies many instances in illustration of the truth of this statement and of the manner in which evidence can be manipulated in order to fit in with particular views, and it is very probable that most thinkers have unconsciously fallen into this intellectual snare some time or other in the course of their inquiries and investigations. It is only as our knowledge of the subject increases and as our general view expands, as the immense difficulties and intricacies which this particular inquiry presents are more thoroughly recognised, as the conclusions built up upon a certain line of evidence come to be negatived by evi-

dence of an entirely different sort, that we are led to retrace our steps and to once more traverse the whole ground, and that our ultimate conclusions, in so many instances, differ so fundamentally from those formed amidst our first and most powerful impressions.

The first, and for perhaps the larger number of persons, the most telling argument in favour of the spiritistic theory is the circumstance that it is **the one increasingly adopted by science.**

It will have been seen from the references given in the introductory paragraphs of this book that those best acquainted with the subject and possessed of the largest amount of accurate knowledge and experience, are practically unanimous in pronouncing in favour of the spiritistic explanation of the phenomena. If these pronouncements are in some instances still somewhat halting and reserved, or are hidden under a technical and scientific phraseology, they are on that account no less clear and emphatic. And the strength of this position is further increased by the consideration that it has been arrived at by men eminent in other departments of scientific research, who entered upon the inquiry with no favourable disposition and certainly with no *à priori* state of mind in any way inclining them towards the spiritistic theory. On the contrary, they may be said to have adopted it *in spite* of their per-

sonal leanings and inclinations, and solely because the steadily accumulating evidence compelled that conclusion. They arrived at it after every other theory, suggested to explain the phenomena and admitted to explain a very large proportion of them, had been fully and fairly examined and allowed for.

We cannot therefore be surprised that this unexpected and unforeseen testimony, on the part of physical science, carries strong weight with a large mass of inquirers, and that it is so increasingly affecting the public mind as to be powerfully instrumental in supporting and advancing the modern spiritistic movement.

It should be observed, however, that while holding the spiritistic theory in a wider sense, while admitting that all the phenomena cannot be accounted for on subjective grounds, and that the intervention of spiritual beings can alone do so, there are many experienced investigators who cannot be said to have accepted the spiritistic theory in the narrower sense, and to have in any way committed themselves to the view that the spirits of the dead must be regarded as the agents concerned in their production. Indeed, we find in many of them traces of considerable mental reserve, pointing to difficulties which they would seem to have experienced in the course of their researches, and which would seem to have suggested caution in the pronouncement of their verdict.

Thus Sir William Crookes, while committed to the spirit theory in the wider sense, to the action of extraneous intelligence in connection with some of the phenomena, cannot be said to have expressed himself in favour of the theory in the narrower sense — that the intelligence is that of the dead.

"Whilst I have observed many circumstances," he writes, "which appear to show that the will and intelligence of the medium have much to do with the phenomena, I have observed some circumstances which seem conclusively to point to the agency of an outside intelligence not belonging to any human being in the room." The writer has not come across any statement in Sir William Crookes' published accounts which would seem to warrant the conclusion that he believed that intelligence to be that of the dead.

In the same way, Professor Barrett, while quite clear in his acceptance of the spiritistic theory in the wider sense, is not equally clear in the narrower sense. In any case he admits that the induced phenomena may not always be due to the spirits of the dead. Speaking of a case resembling "obsession" in old time, he says[1]:—

"Possibly this is an instance of duplex-personality; more probably I think it is, what it purports to be, a lower influence, or 'spirit,' acting through

[1] *Necromancy and Ancient Magic in its Relation to Spiritualism.*

the medium. Evil as well as good agencies doubtless exist in the unseen; this is equally true if the phenomena are, or are not, due to those who have once lived on earth. In any case, granting the existence of a spiritual world, it is necessary to be on our guard against the invasion of our will by a lower order of intelligence and morality."

Again, the late Professor Henry Sidgwick, while strongly inclining towards the theory of unembodied intelligences, has nowhere expressed it as his view that he considers these intelligences to be departed human beings. Indeed, Professor Sidgwick's utterances on this subject were at all times characteristic for their extreme caution and reserve, and for a certain determination not to go an inch beyond what the evidence may legitimately be said to warrant and to justify.

"Although I do not myself at present," he wrote, "regard the theory of unembodied intelligences as the only hypothesis which will account for known facts, it is the hypothesis most obviously suggested by some of these facts."

In subsequent paragraphs statements from the published writings of former spiritists will be given, from which it will be seen that in many instances grave and valid reasons for rejecting the spiritistic conclusion presented themselves after prolonged ob-

servation and further experiment and experience, and that this was the case even though the theory had long passed into a firm intellectual conviction, and had exercised a powerful moral influence upon the holder.

Still, it is fully conceded that the spiritistic theory in the narrower sense is increasingly becoming the view of a number of scientific researchers, and it is no doubt this significant circumstance which is so largely instrumental in advancing and strengthening the modern movement, and which is favourably disposing the public mind towards the belief that the surviving personalities of departed men are the agents instrumental in producing the phenomena under consideration.

A second argument in favour of the spiritistic theory is no doubt **its simplicity.**

To a very large number of persons the theory commends itself on this ground alone, and where the existence of a spirit-world and the possibility of its action upon our present state of being are thoroughly admitted, such an inference would, in the majority of instances, be no doubt the one naturally suggesting itself by the phenomena observed. It is, moreover, the theory apparently in harmony with the universal belief of mankind, and its acceptance has the further great merit that it saves a vast amount of trouble and complications.

Thus this simple theory practically disposes of the subliminal self and the many intricate problems to which its study has called attention; it peoples the unseen world with the spirits of departed human beings only; it creates a philosophy which is more than sufficient to explain every difficulty and to meet every objection lying in the path of careful and circumspect research. It sees in every serious assault upon itself either the unreasoning scepticism of the uninformed scientist, or the senseless fanaticism of the religionist, and it deals with both in the spirit and terms of a loftier and more exalted creed, and of a more large-hearted and rational philosophy.

And it is this lofty tone, this air of superiority, suggestive of a nobler conception of human life and destiny, and of a deeper and truer knowledge not within reach of the ordinary occasional inquirer, which is so eminently calculated to lead minds astray, and to cause even the thoughtful to shut their eyes to the very real problems and difficulties which acceptance of this theory beyond all doubt involves. How great and manifold these difficulties are will be pointed out hereafter.

It should, however, be observed here that, while it is quite true that the belief in the action upon us of unseen spiritual intelligences and in occasional perceptible manifestations of the spirit-world is a very universal one to which our very instincts would

seem to bear witness, it may seriously be doubted whether the phenomena of modern spiritism stand in any kind of legitimate relation to this belief. For the same human nature which universally believes that the dead can sometimes communicate with the living, and that there is an occasional irruption of the spirit-world into the world of matter, also believes that irruption to be of a fitful and spontaneous kind, wholly beyond human power and control, and taking place according to laws of which it has and can have no sort of inkling or knowledge. It is apt to look upon that world from which this occasional irruption proceeds with awe and reverence, and as a general rule to shrink instinctively from approaching it too closely — intuitively, as it seems, discerning the dangers that might be found to be attending such approach.

Indeed, there is no necessary connection whatever between the common belief in the spirit-world and occasional spirit-manifestations, and the modern belief which is based upon the phenomena initiated and invoked in the séance room; and the distinction need but be pointed out in order to be recognised.

The identity of these two modes of manifestation is for the most part tacitly assumed in spiritistic literature, such assumption being a constant and fruitful source of misapprehension and confusion, and leading, in many instances, to entirely unfair and illegitimate inferences. The distinction, there-

fore, should be clearly borne in mind by all painstaking students of the subject.

The phenomena to which the universal belief of mankind bears witness, and upon which it is founded are, so far as we are concerned, spontaneous phenomena. They take place according to laws and conditions unknown to us and without any conscious initiative on our part. They have in most instances a beneficial moral aim or effect — conveying warning, imparting reproof, or perhaps giving intimation of impending moral or physical danger.

The modern spiritistic phenomena take place in consequence and by reason of a conscious and deliberate human initiative. They are induced for the purpose of gratifying human curiosity, and they are dependent upon and contrived by means of a human medium and agency. Their aim and effect is admittedly not always a good and beneficial one. Thus very little thought will make it apparent that the belief of the modern spiritist has no necessary connection with that belief in a spirit-world and spirit-manifestation which is so universally entertained by mankind.

It may further be urged in favour of the spiritistic theory that **at first sight it would seem to explain all the phenomena and to cover the whole ground.**

It is beyond all doubt the intensely human character of the manifestations which is so apt to entrap

the judgment of the occasional observer, and in some instances, to lead captive even that of the expert scientist. Some of the communicating intelligences most certainly bear a marvellous and striking resemblance to the dead. They have an accurate knowledge of the conditions and circumstances of our earth-life. They act and speak like those who have once themselves lived in this world and tabernacled in a human body. They know our language, our modes of thought and expression, our ways of looking at and of judging things seen and unseen. They know our human weaknesses, our strong points, the peculiar tendencies of our temperament and character. They fit naturally and normally into our common life and its manifold conditions and environments.

And there is, in some of these intelligences, a wonderful continuity of ideas and of individuality. A spirit, writing automatically through the hand of a sensitive, will adopt a certain thought-form or mode of writing and expression to which he will adhere throughout and by means of which he will, in the course of time, become identified. He will to-day continue a communication abruptly terminated yesterday, and he will continue it at the precise word or comma at which he left off, intelligently connecting the thought and concluding the sentence.

Or he will adopt a knock or tap peculiarly his

own, by means of which his advent may be distinguished, and he will for months, and sometimes even for years, consistently adhere to this mode of communication. Or, if the manifestation be objective in character, a spirit will, in voice and appearance bear many of the distinguishing marks of some deceased personality; he will reproduce any peculiar physical defect which may have characterised it; he will lisp or stammer or cough in the precise manner in which the deceased was known to have lisped or stammered or coughed. He will, in short, present a personality in general outline closely resembling that of the dead.

And there is in evidence of this kind a strangely convincing and persuasive power. It is apt, in some instances, to break down the strongest scepticism and to take captive the most rebellious and antagonistic intellect.

The writer knows of instances in which the doubts of years have melted away before a peculiar and familiar touch, or in the reproduction of some well-known and well-remembered habit, and in which a single word, peculiarly pronounced, brought final conviction to the mind. There is, it is fully admitted, a great deal in even very ordinary spiritistic phenomena that *at first sight* speaks strongly in favour of the presence and action of the dead.

But there are, on the other hand, many incon-

trovertible facts which have to be placed side by side with this apparently favourable evidence, and which will, when carefully weighed and examined, be seen to witness strongly **against the spiritistic theory.**

1. There is, in the first place, **the difficulty, if not impossibility, of satisfactorily establishing identity.**

This difficulty is very universally admitted by expert inquirers, and also by a large number of experienced and fair-minded spiritists.

It applies, firstly, to the *name* of the particular communicating intelligence claiming to be that of some departed friend or relative. That name is never given straightforwardly and unhesitatingly. In most instances the inquirers are invited to guess at it, or to deduce it from the nature and contents of the communication which is being made. And there is invariably, even in the case of an apparently successful guess, a considerable amount of reserve on the part of the spirit-intelligence, indicating an uncertain state of mind, and suggesting the possibility of a mistake and of a subsequent modification of its assent. When, in the course of further development, it becomes clear to the inquirer that such a mistake must actually have occurred, the intelligence will readily accommodate itself to the situation. It will either declare that the supposed de-

ceased relative has already gone, and that another spirit has taken his place; or that its mind is still clouded and perturbed from the violent shock of death and from want of familiarity with the new environments; or it will assert that the doubt generated in the inquirer's mind is reacting on its own mind, and is causing the confusion. Or it will, by an ingenious manipulation of the contents of the communication given, point out an error or misconception in its interpretation, and thus attempt to evade the difficulty.

Or it will resort to the still bolder manœuvre of insisting that the misstatement was purposely made in order that the faith and confidence of the inquirers in the integrity of the spirit-messengers might be tested, and that the evidence might be made more emphatic and convincing in the end. The fact remains that in by far the larger number of instances, while the intelligence is clear and emphatic enough in its account of itself, while it refers with accuracy to many events and circumstances relating to its supposed past life, while its method of communication is perfect in its precision and control, its memory is invariably faulty and unreliable as to the exact name which it bore in that supposed past earth-life.

Many of the intelligences, and this is more particularly the case with those constituting themselves

what is technically called the habitual "controls"[1] of the sensitive (his guides and directors), never claim any kind of earth relationship with the sensitive, and either call themselves by some kind of

[1] How marvellous and extended the powers and faculties of some of these "controls" are, may be gathered from an account of "Sittings with Mrs. Thompson," given by Dr. Van Eeden in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,* xlvi., 1902. "Nelly (Mrs. T.'s control) announced, in the course of various séances, that on three occasions she herself, and on another occasion another spirit, had come to visit me in my dreams. In two instances these visits corresponded closely in time with dream visions of my own which I had recorded in my diary previously to the receipt of letters from Mr. P——, giving details of Nelly's statements, and in all four instances there is evidence of telepathic rapport between Nelly and myself. The second instance is the most remarkable. For then, in my dream, I made what I thought to be a mistake, and called out 'Elsie! Elsie!' instead of 'Nelly.' I put down the fact in my notes the next morning, the name Elsie being absolutely without any meaning, and quite strange to me. Two days later I got a letter telling me that Nelly's spirit-friend Elsie had heard me calling, and that she had been sent by Nelly to answer me. So my mistake was no mistake; the name Elsie, though strange to me, had come into my head by some mysterious influence, and the message across the channel was received."

In Mrs. Piper's case two apparently distinct controls are capable of communicating simultaneously, one by the voice speaking and one by the hand writing. "Mrs. Piper's right hand," wrote Dr. Hodgson in the *Forum,* some years ago, "is taken possession of, so to speak, by some other 'control,' purporting to be a deceased friend of the sitter, while Phinuit 'controls' the voice. On two occasions both hands wrote contemporaneously and independently of each other, purporting to represent different deceased persons, while Phinuit was using the voice."

poetic or conventional name, such as "sunshine" or "dewdrop," or give that of some well-known and long since deceased personality. It is then explained that it is by the occult law of affinity or spiritual harmony that they have been drawn into the sensitive's sphere and environment, and that they have come for the purpose of conveying information and instruction, and of giving evidence calculated to bring a doubting world back to a belief in a spirit-state and a future life.

If by any chance a circumstance is discovered which does not fit in with these statements of the supposed deceased personality, or which flatly contradicts them: — if Cicero, for instance, is found to have misquoted Latin, or to have cited, as his own, sentences which he has never written, or if some medical "control" is discovered to have made a wrong diagnosis, it is explained that the communication is being made through an imperfect instrument, that it is not sufficiently passive for the intelligence to express its ideas correctly, or that amidst the changed conditions of its life it has lost the power of accurately distinguishing its own thoughts from those of the mind through which it is operating.

The spiritistic theory, in fact, as to the nature of the future life and the transformations which our mental operations are there said to experience can, as will be seen hereafter, be easily made to

cover and to explain difficulties and objections of this, and indeed of every kind.

But the difficulty of satisfactorily establishing identity is equally great when the name of some well-remembered deceased relative has been given at the outset, and when that name is rigidly adhered to throughout the entire course of the experiment. We thus sometimes meet with instances in which the evidence is satisfactory up to a certain point. There is a series of accurate references to the past earth-life, to a mass of incidents of perhaps a trivial but still highly evidential character, there is a consistent account of the supposed past earth-life *in its general characteristics and outline.* But there is invariably a startling display of lapse of memory when some of the less well-known incidents of the past life are referred to, when comment upon or explanation of any particular occurrence in it are invited, or when some definite statement disclosing some of its more hidden secrets are asked for. The writer has frequently suggested tests of this character and in no single instance have they been *immediately* and satisfactorily supplied. He has again and again pointed out that one good test of identity would consist in the communication of some circumstance not possibly within the knowledge of anyone of the sitters but easily ascertainable upon subsequent inquiry. In only one or two instances was such a test supplied, subsequent inquiry, how-

ever, going to show that even such information was conceivably within reach of the subliminal mind of the sensitive or latent in that of several of the sitters. The writer is convinced that when such apparently conclusive evidence is given at *subsequent* sittings it cannot be accepted as of any value in establishing the identity of the intelligence. Careful observation and experience have taught him that these intelligences have means of gaining access to knowledge which are wholly unknown to us, and that they frequently avail themselves of those means in order to furnish proof of identity. He knows of instances in which a supposed friend or relative communicated for months and even years and, day by day, gave fresh and striking evidence of identity, some portions of which could not possibly have been in the minds of the sensitive or of the sitters, but where the intelligence, on its own confession, turned out to be a masquerading one in the end, and where the information given must therefore have been gained through access to other, and in these instances, distant mind or minds or by other means unknown to us. Speaking generally, however, there is in these intelligences as the American Professor Newbold writes, "An unaccountable ignorance of matters which on any theory should have been well-known to them," and it is this unaccountable ignorance which, in his opinion, constitutes a forcible argument against the spiritistic theory.

And that the difficulty referred to is no mere isolated experience, due perhaps to imperfect observation or to doubts increasingly growing up in the inquirer's own mind, is evident from the writings of some spiritists, themselves thoroughly convinced of the reality of the phenomena and committed to the spiritistic theory in the narrower sense.

"Another cause of doubt," wrote the late Mr. Stainton-Moses in *Spirit-Identity* (p. 42), "is the extreme difficulty that is usually found in getting any fact precisely given, especially *facts that are certainly external to the knowledge of the sitters.* There is a general haziness about the messages where there is not positive error in the statements made, and it is extremely difficult to get anything like definite and concise facts plainly put, unless this be insisted on as a preliminary to further colloquy. . . . Another cause which has strengthened the inherent feeling of antecedent improbability with which most of us start, is the mass of contradictions in the messages and the general air of unreality that very frequently pervades them. It seems unreal and unlikely that a friend with whom our converse was that of soul to soul should appear for a moment only at a promiscuous séance to give the briefest passing word of salutation, or to cause the poor mourner to vex himself as to the identity of his friend, if not to feel disgusted at an apparent attempt to sport with his feelings, etc."

"Inconsistencies, incoherencies, and contradictions in a communicator's account of himself," writes Mrs. Sidgwick, "oblivion and error about things which it seems inconceivable that the real person should have forgotten or be mistaken about, and an intellectual standpoint inferior to his in life are, it will be admitted, good reasons for doubting the communicator's claim to identity."

The late Professor Perty, a well-known Swiss physiologist and, for many years, an ardent investigator of the occult, who in his deeply interesting work, *The World Seen and Unseen,* had pronounced in favour of the spiritistic theory, wrote in his later years, in his *Recollections of an Inquirer into the Mysteries of Nature and of Spirit,* as follows:—

"Many spiritists believe that they have had positive experiences of this kind (establishing identity of spirits with certain deceased persons), and I have in my book taken this into account and have expressed myself in favour of spirit-identity, pronouncing the theory of a deceiving demonic world to be the less probable one. It cannot, however, be denied that the proofs in favour of this position are not as convincing as we could desire. For when these beings are questioned as to their nature and mode of operation, their answers are, for the most part, evasive, ambiguous, and frequently trivial and unsatisfactory."

A very interesting case in point is that of the trance-personality or "control" of the famous Boston medium Mrs. Piper, respecting whose integrity and abnormal powers Dr. Hodgson, Professor James, and the English scientists are entirely agreed. In Mrs. Piper's case spirit-control would seem to have attained its most perfect form and to be free from those defects which imperfect trance, absence of the necessary mind-passivity on the part of the sensitive, and any lingering doubt in the sitters' mind as to the absolute *bona fides* of the sensitives are apt to import into the development of the phenomena.

Mrs. Piper's chief control is (or rather was) an entity calling itself "Dr. Phinuit"— according to his statements a former Marseilles physician, but now one of the many enlightened and advanced spirits eager to prove to a doubting and especially a scientific world the continuity of life and the persistence of the individual after physical death.

"Dr. Phinuit" writes and speaks intelligently and connectedly through Mrs. Piper's entranced organism, he gives information on subjects wholly outside any conceivable reach of her mind, he introduces deceased friends and relatives of persons unexpectedly brought to Mrs. Piper's séances (in one instance with features concealed) and he exhibits all the marks of a consistent and continuous and entirely independent individuality.

"Whatever or whoever Phinuit may be," writes an experienced observer, "he is a well-established personality, so strongly marked and with such definite characteristics, that Mrs. Piper, in her trance state, *is* Phinuit and no longer Mrs. Piper. It would be difficult to imagine two personalities so absolutely dissimilar as Mrs. Piper, gentle, simple, womanly, with a somewhat narrow range of interests, and Phinuit, blustering, masculine, tricky, and prevaricating."

All attempts which have been made with a view to clearly establishing Phinuit's identity — a thing which should present no particular difficulty, seeing that it is not so many years since he claims to have left the body — have failed, and Mr. Leaf, writing on this subject in volume vi. (p. 560) of the *Proceedings,* expresses it as his opinion that there is not the least ground for believing that Dr. Phinuit is what he gives himself out to be — the spirit of a departed Marseilles physician.

"His own word does not," he says, "in view of his moral standard, apart from other considerations, carry even a presumption of veracity; nor has a single one of the numerous statements he had made as to his life on earth proved capable of verification. On the other side, his complete ignorance of French is a positive ground for disbelieving him and one which he has never been able to explain."

As a particular instance of Phinuit's prevarications Mrs. Sidgwick quotes the following passages from Dr. Hodgson's article in volume viii. (p. 50) of the *Proceedings*.

"Definite evidence establishing the existence of a Jean Phinuit Scliville under the circumstances described by Phinuit would not, of course, establish the identity of such once living person with Mrs. Piper's Phinuit, but the complete *lack* of any such evidence appears to me to tell forcibly against the supposition that Mrs. Piper's Phinuit is what for several years he has been asserting himself to be.

"Concerning his inability to speak French, Phinuit's original explanation to me was that he had lived in Metz the latter part of his life, and there were many English there, so that he was compelled to speak English and had forgotten his French. I replied that that explanation was very surprising, and that a much more plausible one would be that he was obliged to use the brain of the medium, and would therefore manifest no more familiarity with French than she possessed. This — trite enough — suggestion appeared to Phinuit also more plausible, since a few days later *he offered it himself* to another sitter as an explanation of his inability to sustain a conversation in French.

"Dr. F——, one of Mrs. Piper's sitters, questioned Phinuit about the prominent medical men in Paris in Phinuit's time. The names of Bouvier and

Dupuytren were given. Dr. F—— tells me he himself knew nothing about Bouvier previously, but knew well about Dupuytren. The doctors he had in mind at the time of his question 'were Velpeau Bouillaud, Nelaton, Andral, and many others, all prominent forty or fifty years ago, with extended reputations.'

"Taking the foregoing considerations together, it appears to me that there is good reason for concluding that Phinuit is not a *French* doctor."

In volume xxxvi. of the *Proceedings,* Mrs. Sidgwick writes: —

"The statements and the intellectual calibre of many of Mrs. Piper's trance-personalities are utterly inconsistent with their claim and even in the best personations there are lapses which cannot easily be explained if we are in direct communication with the professed communicator. . . . At the same time . . . along with the limitations there are fragments of knowledge exhibited by the trance-personality in some sittings which it is very difficult to suppose to have been acquired by Mrs. Piper in any normal way. A large proportion of these fragments of knowledge are in the minds of the sitters, some are in the minds of distant living persons and a few were, so far as we can tell, known only to the dead."

Professor William James says: —

"The *prima facie* theory, which is that of spirit-control, is hard to reconcile with the extreme triviality of most of the communications. What real spirit, at last able to revisit his wife on this earth, but would find something better to say than that she had changed the place of his photograph? And yet that is the sort of remark to which the spirits, introduced by the mysterious Phinuit, are apt to confine themselves."

But a still more fatal instance of failure to establish spirit-identity is reported in the *Proceedings* of the Society published in 1898. It is one of very exceptional significance, as it is concerned with the supposed communication, after departure from the body, of Mr. W. Stainton-Moses (M.A. Oxon.), a man who during his lifetime was one of the best and most trustworthy of English mediums, and who for a number of years and to the very end of his life, was an enthusiastic and ardent defender and propagator of the spiritistic theory and creed. From the spiritistic point of view it was certainly a thing reasonably to be expected that such a person would, after death, make exceptional efforts to communicate with his friends in order to satisfactorily establish identity, since he, above all others, must have been aware that it is there that one of the very weakest

links in the spiritistic chain of reasoning is to be found.

Mr. Stainton-Moses, it will be remembered had, in the course of his earth-life, received a series of very striking automatic communications on the great subject of religion and of man's relation to the spirit-world and to God. These communications had been declared to emanate from some of the great sages of antiquity inhabiting the higher spheres of the spirit-world, who in the course of ages had gathered vast stores of knowledge and learning, and whose mission it now was to educate the world, and to impart to it true views of duty and of religion, and more exact information as to the future life.

In their dogmatic aspect these communications had had a revolutionary effect on Mr. Moses' mind — at that time a clergyman of the Church of England and a master at University College, London. He had experienced considerable difficulty in accepting them, had again and again entertained misgivings as to their real origin, but had finally yielded to the beauty and apparent reasonableness of the ideas and sentiments contained in them.

The chief communicators of these automatic messages had been in the habit of designating themselves " Imperator," " Rector," and " Doctor." Before his death, however, Mr. Moses had obtained the supposed real earth names of these intelligences

and had communicated them to his friend, the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, only. After Mr. Stainton-Moses' death, therefore, Mr. Myers' mind would be the only mind in the world holding these names. And Mr. Myers was in England when news came that Mr. Moses was apparently communicating through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper in America. Other spirit-intelligences communicating through the same medium, of whose integrity Dr. Hodgson had little doubt, vouched for his identity, declared, in fact, that "they had found him (Mr. Moses) in another part of their world" and accurately described his former physical appearance, etc. The *soi-disant* Stainton-Moses then began to write through Mrs. Piper's hand, and, commenting upon some of the statements made by his former spirit-guides, modified them to a very considerable extent, declaring some of them to be untrue and contrary to his own now personal experience, others to be imperfectly expressed and "more the medium's own theory of things."

It was then suggested to "Mr. Stainton-Moses" that as no one in the United States knew the actual earth names of his three former controls, it would be an excellent test of identity if these names were now given and were found to be those disclosed to Mr. Myers in England during Mr. Stainton-Moses' lifetime.

After a good deal of shuffling and delay three

names were actually given, but, much to the disappointment of those interested in the experiment, neither of these three names was found to correspond with those disclosed to Mr. Myers by Mr. Stainton-Moses during his lifetime.

"In this case," writes Professor W. R. Newbold,[1] "we have the difficulties which attach to the spiritistic theory brought out in the highest relief. The general tenor of the communications, the allusion to Mr. Speer, the reception of the names of Myers and Hodgson, have an air of verisimilitude. The communicator then gives us, with the most solemn asseveration of their accuracy and with apparent consciousness of the importance of his statement to a cause which he had in life much at heart, three names which the real Mr. Moses must have known and which of all possible things would seem to be the hardest for the spirit to forget — the names of the spirit-friends who, as he claims, opened his eyes while still on earth to the realities of the eternal life. And not one of these names is true or has the least semblance of truth! Furthermore, of all the points touched upon during the sitting this was the only one that was unknown to both the sitters. . . . To my own mind this failure on the part of the alleged Moses is an obstacle to the acceptance of the spiritistic theory which has not yet

[1] *Proceedings*, part xxxiv.

been set aside, and which must be satisfactorily explained before that theory can be regarded as meeting the requirements of the case."

We have here, then, a clear and proven case of spirit deception, from whatever point of view we may be disposed to look upon the phenomenon presented. For either the spirit-personality communicating through Mrs. Piper, and whose identity with the late Stainton-Moses is vouched for by another spirit-intelligence (a former personal friend of Dr. Hodgson), was not that of Stainton-Moses, and was but making desperate but futile attempts to extract the information desired from the mind of one of the sitters, or possibly seeking to establish telepathic communication with Mr. Myers' mind. Or if, in spite of the grave difficulties attending such a conclusion, the identity of the spirit with the late Stainton-Moses be admitted, the intelligences which communicated through his mediumship during his earth-life, and which made disclosures revolutionising his life, must have been untruthful and must have made deliberate misstatements.

The matter assumes a serious aspect when it is borne in mind that the disclosures made through Mr. Stainton-Moses' agency are practically accepted as foundation truths by thousands and tens of thousands of intelligent spiritists, and that it is upon the statements of "Imperator," "Rector," and

"Doctor" that the higher form of modern spiritism constructs its creed and philosophy.

But that the difficulty of satisfactorily establishing spirit-identity, under proper test conditions imposed by expert and cautious observers, is not confined to England only, but is experienced in all parts of the world, is evident from many incidental references in the better-class foreign spiritistic literature, and from the works of painstaking investigators who, although thoroughly committed to the spiritistic theory and to the belief that a large proportion of these phenomena must be ascribed to the action of the dead, are nevertheless determined not to assert anything beyond what the evidence at present available may be said to warrant.

These difficulties may not unfairly be summed up in the weighty words of the late Mr. Aksakov, a former Russian Minister of State and the author of a deeply interesting work, entitled *Animism and Spiritism.*

"What, then," writes Mr. Aksakov (p. 738), "is the final conclusion of our treatise on the spirit hypothesis. It is this: that while we have by a laborious road arrived at the conviction that the individuality of man survives the dissolution of the body, and is capable, under certain conditions, to manifest itself by means of a human body susceptible to such affinitive influences, the absolute proof as to the identity of the manifesting intelligence is an

impossibility. We have to content ourselves with a mere relative proof, with the mere possibility of admitting the fact. This is a truth which we should thoroughly recognise."

2. The second grave difficulty in the way of accepting the spiritistic theory in the narrower sense is **the known love of personation on the part of the manifesting intelligences.**

In the course of the preceding paragraphs attention has already been drawn to this curious aspect of the phenomena. It is a difficulty which is well known and recognised by really experienced experimenters, and to which all spiritistic literature in all countries of the world bears constant and emphatic testimony. The writer has come across innumerable instances in which the assumption of the name of some great historic celebrity, or of some more recently deceased person of note, characterised all the manifestations, but in which the simplest test, based upon some knowledge of that individual's ideas or writings, more than sufficed to disperse the illusion.

We thus meet with Carlyles who do not remember the most striking and best-known incidents in their past history, with Newmans who cannot mention the title of a single book which they have written, with Kingsleys who, in the other world, have become the most hopeless of idiots and imbeciles. We

meet with "vain creatures," as Mr. Stainton-Moses himself puts it, "strutting in borrowed plumes — Shakespeares who cannot spell, Bacons who cannot convey consecutive ideas; with others, really actors of excellence, who play their part for a time with skill." "The free use," he continues, "made of names great and honoured amongst men, is one of the most suspicious of signs, especially when we find, as is too frequently the case, that they are made the sponsors for pretentious nonsense, bombastic platitude, or egregious twaddle, still more so when the claims put forward break down on the simplest examination."

In some instances, as has already been pointed out, the "liberated" subliminal mind — to speak in the phraseology of modern psychical science — of the sensitive may well be held to be the true originator of the personation, supplying from its storehouse of information the material necessary for the construction of the supposed personality. But this clearly cannot be held to be the case in each single instance, certainly not in those in which other, and perhaps objective manifestations, attend the phenomena, in which the sensitive remains in an entirely normal condition, or in which it can be conclusively shown that his intellectual status and environments preclude the possibility of access, even subliminally, to some of the knowledge displayed by the operating intelligence. We are in such in-

stances driven to the conclusion that some independent spirit-entity, closely allied to the medium, is creating the personation, even though it be creating it much after the method adopted by the subliminal mind.

In spiritistic circles an extraordinary and incomprehensible amount of confidence is apt to be placed in these masquerading intelligences, and the writer knows of cases in which the latter have been allowed to continue their pranks for years, even though every test applied to establish identity had failed, and it had become plain to the most inexperienced observer that the intelligence could not possibly be that which it gave itself out to be.

But by far the most frequent phenomenon in connection with these experiments is the attempt, on the part of the intelligences, to personate departed friends or relatives of inquirers. Here, as has already been pointed out, the greatest possible facilities are afforded to the operators by the thoughts and desires for the most part animating the sitters, and by the ease with which information, necessary for the success of the personation, becomes accessible to them.

Some of these personations are strangely successful and realistic, and they are apt to become more so as the confidence of the circle increases, and as the minds of the sitters, by reason of a higher de-

gree of passivity attained, more readily yield the information required.

In the writer's opinion, other and distant minds can also, *after a time,* be brought into requisition, and can be " tapped " by these intelligences, so that, for the casual observer, the case for identity would at times almost seem to be complete. But for the really cautious and watchful mind there will always be some flaw in the evidence. It generally consists in those " little things " or circumstances attending the manifestation which are better felt than described, and which it is extremely difficult to put into words.

Thus we have the report of a Miss W——, writing in the *Proceedings* of the Society (vol. viii.), as follows: " The clearly marked personality of that friend whom I will call T., is to me the most convincing proof of Mrs. Piper's supernatural powers, but it is a proof impossible to present to anyone else." " Yet her mother," it is added, " felt after a sitting *that it did not really seem like T.*"

A very world of meaning is contained in these latter words, but the probability is that the mother, if asked on what grounds she based her doubts would, in the face of the generally conclusive evidence, be unable to state them — for the simple reason that these doubts flow from a variety of " little things " connected with human personality, the absence or presence of which remain in most in-

stances the most telling evidence in the matter of identity.

Dr. Hodgson, as many psychic students know, was strongly disposed to accept the identity of the intelligence designated by him " G. P." with that of his deceased friend, yet " believing in G. P.'s guarantee," writes Mrs. Sidgwick, " involves us in difficulties, since he is capable of corroborating false statements."

In the same way Mrs. De Morgan, wife of the distinguished American scientist and spiritist, and author of that interesting work, *From Matter to Spirit,* informs the London Spiritualistic Alliance [1] " that the resemblance seems never to be perfect and to consist of fragments of similarity, or even identity, rather than of a strong general presentation of the whole being."

So thoroughly indeed is the difficulty arising from this manifest tendency to personation on the part of the spirit-intelligences realised by our modern experimenters that various ingenious theories have been suggested by them with a view to accounting for the perplexing phenomenon in some manner not unfavourable to the spiritistic theory.

With that accepted in spiritistic circles we are already familiar. We have seen that the conventional spiritistic notions respecting the future conditions of the discarnate spirit — the difficulties

[1] Address delivered in 1886 (p. 9).

presumably attending its attempts to communicate through the agency of a perhaps imperfect medium, the various circumstances apt to interfere with the conditions necessary for a perfect manifestation — can be stretched to almost any extent, and can be made to explain away every kind of unfavourable evidence. But it is a theory which can scarcely be said to bear close investigation in the light of our fuller knowledge and in that of a wider and more many-sided experience.

Professor Sir Oliver Lodge suggests the possibility of a manifestation of a *portion only* of the deceased personality — a kind of semi-conscious intelligence in some incomprehensible way drifting into our sphere or environments through the agency of sensitives.

"Eliminating," he writes, "physical phenomena for the present, suppose that I am asked further: Do you consider that trance utterances are ever due to the agency of departed persons? I am bound to say that, as regards the content or intelligence of the message, I have known cases which do very strongly indicate some form of access to a persistent portion of the departed personality; and occasionally, though rarely, the actual agency of a deceased person is indicated.

"But if by agency my hearers understand me to mean in all cases conscious agencies, direct communication with full consciousness of what is going

on, they must allow me to explain that of that in most cases I am extremely doubtful. It seems to me much more often like a dream intelligence or a subconscious part of the persistent mind that we have access to, not a conscious part. It appears to me still a true kind of telepathy; and telepathy from, as well as to, a subconscious stratum. To tell truth, I do not myself hold that the whole of any one of us is incarnated in these terrestrial bodies; certainly not in childhood; more, but perhaps not so very much more, in adult life. What is manifested in this body is, I venture to think likely, only a portion, an individualised, a definite portion, of a much larger whole. What the rest of me may be doing, for these few years while I am here, I do not know: perhaps it is asleep; but probably it is not so entirely asleep with men of genius; nor, perhaps, is it all completely inactive with the people called 'mediums.'"

The very suggestion of this theory is indicative of the immense difficulty which cultivated thought experiences in the face of the perplexing problems presented by these manifestations. But it is a theory suggested by reflection and in the study, rather than by the persistent observation of phenomena in the séance room and in the presence of sensitives. For why is it, we may surely ask, that the dream-likeness is somehow most marked when

pressing questions seeking to establish identity are being put, but that it entirely vanishes under all ordinary conditions? There is, as a matter of fact, nothing in the least dream-like about the larger number of these intelligences. On the contrary, they are apt to exhibit a most astonishing and extraordinary wide-awakeness, indicating a perfect control of faculty, and displaying a remarkable ingenuity in the obtaining of information and in the manipulation and adjustment of that information for purposes of their own.

In his address delivered before the Fourth International Congress of Psychology in Paris in 1901 Dr. Frederick H. Van Eeden said: —

"My personal impressions have been subject to the following variations: During the first series of experiments, in November of last year, I had on two or three occasions a very vivid impression that the man whose relics I had brought with me — namely, a pair of gloves — and who died sixteen years ago, was a living spirit, and in direct *rapport* with me through the intermediary, Mrs. Thompson; a number of small details gave me a sense of the evidence being complete. When I returned to Holland I discovered that there were inexplicable errors. If I was really holding intercourse with the deceased he could never have made such errors as I found in my notes. And what was noteworthy was that these errors were always *in the details that*

I did not myself know, and which I was not able to correct at the time."

We have here a very excellent case in point, and one strongly suggesting personation on the part of the manifesting intelligence. In fact, no other explanation will really meet the circumstances of the case. Dr. Van Eeden was satisfied that the intelligence was not that of some secondary personality of Mrs. Thompson; it was not his own "subliminal self," since he remained during the manifestation in a conscious and entirely normal state. An intelligent independent entity, therefore, would seem to have been communicating, and that intelligence bore some resemblance to the deceased personality which it gave itself out to be. But the construction of that personality depended for its material upon Dr. Van Eeden's conscious and perhaps unconscious memory, and even in the manipulation of that material the intelligence was not altogether successful. *"If I was holding intercourse with the deceased he could never have made such errors as I found in my notes!"*

And there is nothing in the evidence subsequently obtained by Dr. Van Eeden, in the way of familiar gestures and expressions of joy and gratitude which, in the face of the known powers and practices of these intelligences, can be said to furnish a strong case in favour of identity. It must always remain

a suspicious circumstance that at a first communication such information only is given as can be shown to be contained in the mind of the experimenter, and that additional information and evidence in favour of identity is only furnished *on subsequent occasions,* when the experimenter is increasingly *en rapport* with the intelligence, and when he is consequently increasingly, though unconsciously, yielding information stored up in his sub or supra liminal mind.

Nor does Dr. Van Eeden's suggestion that, while the spirit may perhaps be really communicating at first, the medium's "other self" may, after a time, be taking its place and, acting on suggestion, may continue the personation, leaving it a difficult matter to determine at what point the veridical manifestation ceases and the personation begins, lessen the force of this suspicion. On the contrary, the theory of an independent intelligence, having access to *some* facts respecting the deceased personality, and only in the course of time securing additional information, as the storehouse of the experimenter's mind is being increasingly thrown open to it, or as it is able to obtain it by other means unknown to us, is far more in keeping with the general evidence furnished by spiritistic experiments, and infinitely better explains all the facts of the case. A deceased personality, anxious to give indubitable evidence of its identity, might surely be expected to

at once and unhesitatingly present some little fact or circumstance calculated to leave no possible doubt on the inquirer's mind, and to effectually settle the main question at the very outset. That such facts or circumstances are never presented in this way, and at the very start, surely forcibly suggests inability on the part of the communicating intelligence to present them.

The force of this argument is still further strengthened when it is borne in mind that one of the claims of these intelligences is that it is their mission to establish proof of the continuity of the individual life after physical death, and that they are "sent" to free man's clouded understanding from the bondage of mistaken beliefs, and to enlighten him as to his duties and the consequences of his actions both here and hereafter. Beings coming to us on such a mission and for such a purpose, and having had so long and so favourable an opportunity of ascertaining and of overcoming the hindrances lying in the way of acceptance of their mission, may reasonably be expected to present to us better and more satisfactory credentials. It is not upon evidence so wholly unsatisfactory as theirs, upon "disclosures" so contradictory and admittedly mixed with so much falsehood, upon manifestations manifestly so often fraudulent, that thoughtful persons will be disposed to abandon their cherished

and tried convictions, and that they will adopt a creed or a philosophy so revolutionary in its character and tendency.

"Can spirits," inquires Mr. Stainton-Moses, evidently struggling with these difficulties and suspicions, "can spirits, being, as we know, able to obtain access to sources of human information, get up their facts and give such travesty of them as they can remember, reckoning not without some show of reason, on the credulity which will accept any plausible story, or on their power to psychologise the investigator or so mix up fancy, fraud, and fact as to bewilder and perplex him?"

In another place [1] he frankly admits that "all the information ever given him in proof of the presence of the departed might, in harmony with his experience of the spirits, have been first obtained and then imparted by a false intelligence."

"It must be clear," writes Mr. Aksakov, in *Animism and Spiritism*,[2] "that if the spirit of a medium has the power to share the inward conceptions of the sitters and to form a body in accordance with them, how much more must a spirit, freed from the body, be able to do this and to an extent of which we may have no idea. This is the reason why likeness is no proof of identity."

[1] *Spirit-Identity*, p. 43. [2] p. 730.

3. A third difficulty in the way of acceptance of the spiritistic theory is **the general moral character of the manifesting intelligences.**

It is important, in this connection, to clearly distinguish between the communications and the communicators, and to bear in mind that the two have no necessary connection with each other. We cannot establish the moral integrity of an individual only from the things he may write or say. Spiritists are never tired of urging as evidence of the high moral character of some of the intelligences the exceptional beauty and lofty tone of their communications, as though it were a self-evident truth that high moral sentiment cannot go together with moral baseness, and that lofty and pure ideas must of necessity emanate from a lofty and pure source.

The universal experience of mankind unfortunately bears constant and emphatic testimony to the very contrary, and the error underlying this view has probably never been so forcibly exemplified as in the days in which we live. Thousands know to their cost and, in many instances to their grievous suffering, that even the most exalted religious profession may go hand in hand with the most pronounced moral depravity and with the most extreme form of social and commercial dishonesty. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is no doubt the test which we have the best possible authority for apply-

ing in the matter, but words and statements are not fruits and the expression of the loftiest sentiment is no sure indication of the moral integrity of the source from which it flows.

As a matter of fact we have, in our present state of being, no means whatever of determining in what the "fruits" of these intelligences may be conceived to consist: we can only form our judgment upon the general effect which intercourse with them produces upon human conduct and human character, and upon the kind of things which they are known to habitually *do*. And under the application of this test the spiritistic theory must be admitted to exhibit its very weakest points and to suggest the gravest possible consideration.

It is because of the habitual *doings* of these intelligences, of the way in which they are apt to act and of the mischief so frequently resulting from such action, that Spiritism itself has hitherto been regarded with so much disfavour and distrust by the general public. There is scarcely an investigator of the phenomena who, if he were to speak the whole truth, has not a story to tell of cunning and crafty deception, of the exhibition of deliberate falsehood and prevarication, and of the display of heartless and wanton cruelty. The very trifling of these intelligences, by the habitual personation of the dead, with the most tender instincts of our nature is indicative of a high degree of moral per-

verseness, and even though the largest possible allowance be made, in view of the spiritistic theory, for the frequent and unavoidable intervention of "low spirits," or for the hindrances necessarily obstructing the approach of and communications from the exalted dead, the phenomenon is too frequent an one, and one occurring under conditions too favourable, to admit of any modification of our judgment. And the circumstance that there are some instances on record in which this perverse spirit-element would seem to be strangely absent from the phenomena, and even after a lapse of years to be showing no signs whatever of exhibiting itself, does not really invalidate the force of our argument.

The writer has before him a number of carefully investigated and in some instances personally observed cases in which the spirit-intelligence, after giving for many months in succession abundant evidence of its identity with some deceased friend or relative, after conveying the most exalted teachings respecting human duty and responsibility, after habitually introducing itself by prayerful aspirations of the most elevating kind, and completely transforming the mental and moral life of the persons concerned, was in the end discovered to be a masquerading intelligence and, on its own confession, keenly intent upon working the moral and physical ruin of its victims. The ingenuity displayed in attaining this end, the tricks and subtleties resorted to in

order to escape detection and to continue "in possession," were in one or two instances of a kind passing all human comprehension and imagination, and the wonder is that anything like an escape from such toils is ever effected at all. In some instances this is only accomplished after the physical constitution of the victim has been completely ruined, in others the termination of the experiment is reached in the asylum or in some institution for the cure of nervous disease. It is surely here, not in their exalted utterances and moral platitudes, that the true "fruits" of these intelligences are to be found.

With the writer, therefore, the objection that with some investigators the phenomena have from the beginning been persistently good, and that after the lapse of time they are still so at this present moment, would have no weight whatever, seeing that innumerable instances of this kind, but nevertheless terminating fatally, are known to him, and that the dénouement may be reached at any moment. The true aim of these intelligences, moreover, may be nothing more than the entire "control" of the sensitive in order that by the perfect exhibition of spirit marvels additional inquirers may be drawn into the fatal circle. The probability is that this is one of the reasons why some highly developed sensitives escape altogether unharmed, and why they are able, without apparent injury to themselves, to continue

the exercise of their mediumship right into old age.

But, whatever view we may be disposed to take of the matter, it must be evident that, considering the doubts and misgivings with which so many persons approach the study of occult phenomena, and the termination which the receipt of any undesirable message is so likely to bring to such studies, it is hardly to be expected that the spirit-intelligences, anxious as we know them at all times to be to open up communication, would prejudice their case by writing or saying things which would but go to shock the moral or religious sensibilities of such persons, and which would thus defeat their own ends. There are cases on record where this has been done, but such cases are the exception, not the rule. The common experience of all investigators is that the intelligences invite their confidence by the expression of high sentiments and by the assertion of good aims and intentions, and that they are only too apt to accommodate their religious and moral views to those entertained by the company in which they find themselves. But really experienced investigators also know that no reliance whatever can be placed upon these statements, and that the religious views of the spirits in particular are subject to the most serious and startling modifications. This aspect of the subject will be more fully dealt with in subsequent paragraphs.

Mrs. Sidgwick, writing of the objections which

in this connection must be urged against the spiritistic theory, says [1]: —

"A disposition to assume powers not possessed and to resort to prevarication and false excuses to account for ignorance or failure, are moral defects which are well known to be frequently exhibited in automatic writing, and which are abundantly exhibited in Mrs. Piper's trance utterances, whether spoken or written."

In illustration of this we may quote the following: —

"Mrs. Piper's controls, 'George Eliot' especially, professed to visit Mr. Myers' circle and to give and receive messages. Not once was there a glimmer of truth in what was said. Dr. Hodgson, inquiring about this, received the reply, 'We would ask you to ask him (Myers) to consider carefully what his thoughts were, that is, not those put into actual speech.'"

It will be admitted, at any rate, that such a display of ingenuity has not the appearance of some dream-like state or partial manifestation of the operating intelligence. An unprejudiced mind, on the contrary, would most probably conclude that the intelligence gives indication of an exceptional wide-

[1] *Proceedings*, vol. xxxvi.

awakeness and of complete control over its mental apparatus.

"'Phinuit's' character," we read, "is tricky; he has all sorts of ways of getting out of a difficult position. He will ignore a question that does not please him, or change the subject, or discuss side issues in order to gain time; often returning later to the point and dealing with it correctly enough, suggesting the possibility of his waiting for the chance of getting the information needed from the mind of the sitter."

"A certain degree of moral perversity," writes Mr. Frank Podmore, "is a frequent and notorious characteristic of automatic expression."

The literature of modern spiritism abounds with references to the exhibition of this moral perverseness on the part of these spirit-intelligences, and even though the accepted spiritistic theory may be stretched so as to amply explain and cover the frequency of the phenomenon, the admission is on that account no less suggestive and significant.

Mr. Stainton-Moses writes in *Spirit-Identity:* —

"Some spirits will assent to leading questions, and, possessed apparently with a desire to please, or unconscious of the import of what they say, or without moral consciousness, will say anything. Such motiveless lying bespeaks a deeply evil nature.

. . . Such an impostor, acting with an air of sincerity, must be as satan clothed in light."

In Appendix II., p. 104, we find the following weighty words: —

"I believe that the agencies concerned in Spiritualism are principally departed human beings, though I also believe that some or many of the lower phenomena are caused by beings who have not yet reached man's plane of intelligence, even as I hold most surely that some who have progressed far beyond it do return to enlighten and instruct him.

. . .

"It is not for me to deny that there are at work in Spiritualism agencies other than departed spirits of our kind. If I insist on the action of these human spirits, it is because I think I see need to do so in order to preserve the balance of truth; not because I have any intention of ignoring the action of spirits below the plane of humanity, or of minimising the undoubted power of trans-corporeal action of the embodied human spirit."

In Edmond's *Letters on Spiritualism*, p. 96, we read: —

"The spirits, though they continued to manifest whenever invited, and breathed nothing but kindness, goodwill, and affection, yet spoke so many falsehoods that he was disgusted with the exhi-

bition. . . . On being asked for explanations as to their false statements, they could give no explanations."

In some instances, as is well known to investigators, the intelligences themselves admit their low moral condition, and, accommodating themselves to the views entertained by the sensitive or sitters as to their condition and the aim of their coming, they seek to approach him by inviting their prayerful interest in their behalf.

Thus we read in *Spirit-Identity*, p. 56: —

"The atmosphere that surrounded the spirit, and of which I was painfully conscious when he manifested his presence, was similarly indicative of unhappiness, and he earnestly asked for prayer. He had been a grasping man: gold had been his god; and he had lived on to find himself bound by golden fetters to the earth where his treasure had been. I have no words to describe the sensation of cold discomfort that his presence brought, nor the air of gruesome and grim misery that was conveyed to us by what was told respecting him. His designation in spirit-life was Woe. The spirit who told us this was asked to put in one word what had brought him to this state. That word was given at once with an intensity that impressed us all most powerfully — Greed. Yet he had not been what the world calls an evil-liver, nor neglectful of his duties.

On the contrary, in his hard, mechanical way he had been punctual and exact in their discharge. But his spirit had been starved," etc.

Or to quote from Mr. Stainton-Moses' private note-book, portions of which were published in the *Proceedings,* Part xxvii. p. 62:—

"After sitting for some time we heard a most melancholy noise, which sounded like the wailing of the wind passing through an iron grating. It grew louder and was a most weird sound, giving the impression of unrest, wailing, and woe. We all felt awe-struck, especially when we were informed that the sound was produced by a large body of undeveloped spirits who were trying to get to us; but our band of spirits would not allow them to approach near the circle. We had never heard so awful a sound as this before. We were then informed by a spirit controlling that Imperator had permitted them to come, hoping that the spirit atmosphere round the circle would benefit them, and he had trusted that they were more progressed than they appeared to be."

The writer has personal knowledge of a number of deeply interesting cases in which the ultimate development of the phenomena disclosed the real aim of the spirit-intelligences to be a desire to gain control of the mind of the sensitive. The methods

adopted with this end in view were, in some instances, of a most subtle and ingenious character, displaying an accurate and surprising knowledge, on the part of the intelligences, of the ways and habits and general disposition of the sensitive and of the means by which the desired end was most likely to be reached. The establishment of this control was in each case a slow and imperceptible process, extending over a considerable period of time (in several instances years), and involving a variety of startling and most extraordinary experiences. In each case the sensitives themselves remained sceptical to the very last as to the dangers threatening them and as to the real ultimate aim of the intelligences.

From prolonged observation and from information obtained within the last few years (for the most part privately communicated to him), the writer is inclined to think that *control of the sensitive* is far more frequently the real ultimate aim of the intelligences invoked through the agency of sensitives than is commonly supposed, and that the entire complicated machinery of mediumship is often set in operation with this one end in view. That such control is not successfully effected in each single instance, and that there are persons who even after prolonged experiments escape wholly unharmed, may no doubt be satisfactorily explained on the spiritistic theory (the mixed character of the intelli-

gences, the greater facilities afforded by our earthly environment for the approach of the lowest amongst them), but its explanation may also lie in the peculiarities of character and temperament of the sensitive, and possibly too in certain limitations imposed on the intelligences themselves, these constituting hindrances in the way of a complete establishment of control.

While there are, for instance, persons who naturally and normally incline to passivity of mind, and who are of a submissive and yielding mental constitution, there are others possessed of the very opposite characteristics, such characteristics being most probably in themselves sufficient to prevent domination by an outside control, or at least rendering that domination a very partial and incomplete one.

Again, there are persons of a naturally unsuspecting and trustful temperament, inclining them instinctively to accept and to believe what is presented in an attractive and plausible and convincing form. Such persons, therefore, naturally susceptible to impressions and influences from without, become still more so when repeated sittings develop in them mind-passivity, and when there is a strong personal desire to enter into communication with the unseen world and the spirits of the dead. Indeed, such persons may be said to be natural mediums, and they may be conceived to be quickly and readily, even though unconsciously, yielding themselves to

spirit-control. There are other persons of strong and independent character, sceptical perhaps in the matter of the spirit-world and of spirit-intercourse and cautiously and judiciously sifting and weighing every scrap of evidence that is being presented to them — resolutely refusing to obey the dictates of any intelligence that does not present satisfactory credentials, and concerning whose identity and integrity they have good reason to entertain doubt. Such persons would naturally, by their very temperament, erect barriers in the way of an invading intelligence, and with them the process of taking control would, under the most favourable circumstances, be a difficult and protracted one, the probability being that such control would not in any case become entire and complete.

It must be evident that in these respective instances the phenomena might reasonably be expected to exhibit many degrees of variety, and experience would certainly seem to point to the fact that it is in this direction, in the mental attitude and constitution of the sensitive and the sitters, rather than in the intelligences themselves, that we have to look for the true solution of the many problems presented by these manifestations.

There is the further consideration of the *physical* health and environments of the sensitive or investigator, considerations of air, of food, of natural constitutional vigour or weakness, as the case may be.

These, beyond all doubt, stand in very real relation to the production of occult phenomena, and to the degree in which access of the intelligences is apt to be facilitated or hindered.

In any case it is from the acts and doings of these intelligences, and from the admitted frequency of these doings, from the effect which they are known to have upon the sensitive and the investigator, not from the statements and assertions which they may choose to make respecting themselves and their aims, that we can alone draw safe and reliable inferences as to their true nature and character, and as to the reasonableness of their claim to be the spirits of the dead.

And even though it be conceded that the spirits of a certain class of persons constantly passing over into the other world might reasonably be held to be the authors and originators of these frauds and deceptions, the frequency of the occurrence and the cruelty and heartlessness so often characterising them would still create the greatest possible difficulty in the way of acceptance of this theory.

Experience constantly teaches that in the most debased of mankind there is a sense of awe and reverence respecting all that relates to the world unseen and to the life after death, of respect for those innate feelings of our nature which impel us to look for some kind of token or communication from those

we have loved and lost — a respect, indeed, often exhibited in a most touching and surprising manner. And unless we are content to believe that such persons, after the change of death, undergo the most entire and complete transformation, parting with every trace of right and proper feeling, and, in the course of time, assuming a kind of demonic nature, we cannot attribute to them the phenomena to which attention has been directed.

Much less can we accept the notion that the delicate mission of enlightening and instructing a doubting world as to the realities of a future world and of a future responsibility, and of opening up communication between it and our present state of being, has been entrusted to intelligences of this order, who, at the very best, can be shown to be in nine cases out of ten of a low moral order, and most of whom abuse the power and the knowledge which they declare to have been placed in their hands.

A vast amount of material, containing first-hand evidence of an extremely interesting character, has recently come into the writer's hands, and has gone to confirm and strengthen impressions which have been slowly forming in his own mind. Unfortunately, this evidence is for the most part of so delicate and personal a character that it cannot be used for publication in a work of this kind. In one or

two instances, however, this restriction does not apply, an express desire accompanying the communication that the substance of it might be used in the interests of this great inquiry, and as a warning to oversanguine and incautious investigators.

One correspondent, until recently an inmate of an asylum, whither spirit-intercourse had, in the course of time, brought him, writes: —

"The spirits are capable of taking possession of any person who comes into relation with them by entering and encompassing their bodies, thereby getting complete knowledge of every thought of the brain, and also obtaining the faculty of suggestion. Even where the possessed one is ignorant of being possessed, the obsessing spirit can, by suggesting thoughts, order the action of the victim or medium or controlled one (whatever name you prefer) so that he or she will act quite differently to their normal manner — indeed, act against their own nature. The spirit will impel them to speak things they would not, do things they should not, and confuse their brain, so that they are actually incapable of knowing, if conscious of spirit-control, whether it is their own ego or the spirit's which acts. . . .

"As it is the object of many spirits to live once more in the flesh, the more intelligent and attractive persons in the better positions of life are, no doubt, most liable to be obsessed. The entry of the spirit into the human body is so subtle in its action that

it is not noticeable by any but the developed medium, who knows the sensation of entry and of leaving. . . .

"In regard to persons confined in lunatic asylums who are in reality obsessed, there will be no remedy while our doctors are in complete ignorance as to the causes of insanity."

The writer's prolonged personal observation has led him to the conclusion that the method commonly adopted by the controlling intelligences with a view to eliciting the various subjective phenomena of mediumship and to obtaining control is the hypnotic one. It is on this theory that many of the startling occurrences of the séance room, sometimes so strongly suggesting the presence and action of deceased friends and relatives, may be easily and adequately accounted for.

We know what happens when a person is placed in the hypnotic state and when his mental operations pass to a large extent under the control of the hypnotiser. His mind then becomes a highly sensitive instrument, which may be manipulated and impressed at will, and in which images can be formed which, for the subject, assume all the characteristics of a definitive objective reality. Such persons can be made to see and to accurately describe things and persons which do not exist, and which have their origin solely in the ideas and mind-pic-

tures formed in the brain of the hypnotiser. Any idea, too, or impression, or picture, lying latent in the mind of the subject, can thus be externalised by means of suggestion, and can, so long as the subject remains under control, become to him a thing objectively as real as anything of which he may have knowledge by means of his ordinary waking mind and senses. Substitute for the corporeal hypnotiser a spirit-entity, operating by the same method, but with infinitely greater facilities, and all is explained.

The first and necessary condition for the success of the operation would be mind-passivity on the part of the sensitive. Control having been effected and rapport established between the two intelligent agents, the mind of the sensitive would become a willing and obedient instrument, marvellously adapted for the production of the many strange phenomena of mediumship so perplexing to the mind of the casual observer.

The spirit-intelligence would then be able, by means of suggestion, to create in the mind of the sensitive the image of any object, or scene, or person, the visualisation of which circumstances and the particular aim of the intelligence might demand, and the things seen, having for the sensitive for the time being all the marks of an objective reality, would be described by him as such to the investigators.

And since there can be no doubt that a spirit-

intelligence, wholly in rapport with the sensitive, and entirely controlling his mind, must have access to the better portion of the latent contents of that mind, both sub and supraliminal, and also most probably to some of the contents of other minds assisting at the experiment, it will readily be seen that the manifestations produced might well be expected to be of an infinitely more successful and surprising character than those produced by the corporeal hypnotiser.

We can thus understand how the sensitive may come to give messages from departed friends and relatives whom he sees but who are not really there, how he can describe scenes and persons and occurrences in the spirit-world which do not exist and which are not taking place, and how he can accurately simulate and reproduce the very voices and gestures and modes of expression and even the signatures of the departed dead.

Very little thought and reflection will go to show what a vast mass of abnormal phenomena such spirit-hypnotism may not cover, and how many inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and misrepresentations so frequently attending these manifestations, it may not go to explain.

Indeed, it is the very thing that we might expect to occur under the application of the method indicated. For it is scarcely to be supposed that the *whole* of any individual mind is ever open to the

controlling or invading intelligence, or that the real internal order and sequence and mutual relationship of the ideas and impressions lying latent in the mind can be accurately gauged and determined by it. The probability is that fragments and disconnected parts only of such knowledge can be extracted and manipulated, and that it is by shrewd guesses and by the automatic working of the sensitive's mind, rather than by the exercise of any discriminative and selective power on the part of the intelligence, that the effect is produced. The sensitive, to put it briefly, becomes, in the state of trance and of mind-passivity, a living automaton, acting wholly at the will of, and in obedience to the suggestion of the controlling intelligence. Frequent experimentation increases the facility of inducing this control and of bringing about a more intimate access of the intelligence to the various portions of the automaton's mental mechanism, and it is the most perfect control and the most expert manipulation of that mechanism which produces the best phenomena and the most convincing and lifelike presentations of the dead.

"The whole matter of spirit-seeing," declares one of these intelligences, "is an imposition upon the credulity of the public . . . a mere trick played off by impressing the subject with the scene which the spirit wishes him to behold. . . . This most

masterly power we have used to make multitudes believe that they could see at a distance without the use of their natural vision. This has given us almost the power to work miracles."

The late Dr. Carl Du Prel, an experienced student of the occult, wrote: —

"If a hypnotist can make suggestion without the use of words, without his corporeality, spirits can surely do the same. If a suggestion can be made without the use of the body, it surely can be made without the *possession* of the body."

From this point of view it must become evident that the habitual cultivation of mind-passivity — a practice now so increasingly prevailing in all sections of society in connection with spiritistic experiments — may, in the course of time, become a source of the gravest possible mental and moral danger, and it is not at all improbable that the cause of many of those more obscure mental aberrations and delusions, which have so long puzzled psychologists and helped to fill our asylums, must be sought for in this direction. With the growth of spiritistic practices, and especially the elicitation of the subjective manifestations, a steadily increasing number of minds must be laying themselves open to spirit-invasion and spirit-suggestion, and to be creating all the conditions favourable for an habitual, though perhaps

unconscious, control and obsession. And the possible consequences of this can easily be conjectured when it is borne in mind that, even if the spiritistic theory and explanation of the matter be adopted, it would still remain certain that the operating agents are, for the most part, intelligences of a low order, with low aims and desires and, in many demonstrated instances, with the deliberate intention and purpose of effecting the moral ruin of the sensitive.

Mr. Hepworth Dixon, writing in *New America,* as far back as 1877, declared that " one-tenth part of the population of the New England States, one-fifteenth part of the population of New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania, lay open, more or less, to impressions from what they call the spirit-world."

" Any mind," writes a thoughtful American occultist,[1] " acting on yours from time to time will leave with yours the seeds and thoughts of its own errors, especially when it can control your body. Two minds have no business using one body. It is unnatural and unhealthy. But far worse is it for the medium to give communications from day to day from several on the unseen side, even though this is done by the agency of one spirit controlling him or her. Such mediums may absorb the mental conditions of those who come for sittings, and of the minds on the other side who desire to communi-

[1] Prentice Mulford.

cate. They are visited by grief-stricken people who want to communicate with their friends. These friends are grieving also, and the medium stands between the embodied and disembodied as a strainer through which are passed the dark and gloomy thoughts from both sides, and as thoughts are things and grieving and regretful thoughts are very harmful things, the medium's mind absorbs a great deal of this element. . . . Greed, selfishness, irritability, anger, animality, are likewise brought them in thought by both mortal and spirit, etc. . . .

"The mediumship that is known is small compared to that which is unknown and all about us. Legions of people are more or less controlled by minds about them in the unseen realm of life. Of this the insane furnish the most marked instance. The victim of insanity may have his or her spirit quite crowded out and forced from the body by the gradual encroachment and action on it of an insane spirit. . . . The cause and cure of insanity will never be known until people deem spiritual laws worthy of attention."

4. As a fourth objection to the spiritistic theory must be urged **the general effect of spiritistic practices upon the sensitive and the investigators.**

This objection, too, has already incidentally been dealt with in some of the preceding sections, and from the description of the *modus operandi* em-

ployed in the elicitation of the phenomena given on p. 59 *et seq.* it will have been inferred in what the *physical and constitutional* effects of these practices consist. The intelligences themselves admit that they cannot produce any perceptible manifestation in the material world without the agency of a certain kind of nerve energy or vital force which is taken from the organisms of the sensitive and the sitters. They further declare that they cannot, under the most favourable circumstances, entirely replace what has thus been abstracted, and that a certain degree of nervous exhaustion must therefore inevitably attend all spirit-manifestations.

The sensitive is constantly conscious of this loss of vitality attending even the moderate exercise of his mediumship, and he fully admits that its too frequent repetition would seriously imperil his physical health and well-being.

To what extent food and air and rest may be regarded as tending to repair this waste it is obviously impossible to determine, since we do not even know for certain in what this " psychic force " precisely consists and from what portion of the organism it is withdrawn. Again, " unfavourable conditions," unavoidably and frequently created by the mental and moral attitude of some member or members of the circle, the indisposition of the sensitive, or the presence of " exceptionally low spirit-intelligences," are admitted to add to the physical dif-

ficulty and strain under which the sensitive is apt in any case to labour and to greatly increase the exhaustive process which is going on.

Physical and, of course, consequent mental exhaustion and prostration must therefore be regarded as symptoms ordinarily and normally attending all objective and perceptible intercourse with the unseen world. And it is surely extremely difficult to identify the dead, our lost friends and relatives, desirous above all others, we must conclude, of securing our well-being and of shielding us from harm, with operations of this nature, and to believe that they will avail themselves of such perilous means as these in order to give evidence of their continued existence and presence with us, and that it is to them therefore that these physical troubles must be ascribed.

Still more difficult of acceptance is the notion that such a process is to be regarded as a natural and normal one, in keeping with some wise and hitherto not generally known natural law, but now brought to light with a view to satisfying our highest needs and to once more convincing a doubting world of the continued existence of the human spirit in a world beyond the grave.

But the force of these objections is still further increased when we come to consider the *moral* effects invariably attending spiritistic practices.

The common claim is that genuine spirit phenomena supply conclusive evidence of incorporeal existence and of the survival of the individual human spirit of physical death, leading to sober and serious views of life and its responsibilities, and to an awakening of the spiritual sensibilities of even the most flippant and careless: that such evidence may therefore in fairness be regarded as a real aid to religion, and that it is to be welcomed in an age which is characteristic for its intense materialism and for its habitual forgetfulness of "higher things," and of the true end and purpose of human life.

At first sight this claim would seem to be a legitimate and reasonable one. There is no doubt whatever that in many instances the first effect of the knowledge of spirit existence, brought home by these means, has been a good one. There is many a case on record in which some trivial but convincing message from the other world has been instrumental in awakening and stimulating moral energy, and in arousing the dormant faculties of the soul.

But experience unfortunately teaches that this attitude of the mind or soul is scarcely ever maintained, and that it cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a stepping-stone to higher moral attainment and to the development of the true religious life. It is an undeniable fact that, however deep the first impression made by spiritistic experiences may be, that impression is apt to wear off after a very short time

and to give place to a craving for new and more striking experiences, and for more frequent intercourse with the mysterious messengers of the spirit-world.

And this habitual spirit-intercourse in its turn creates a kind of familiarity with the things of the spirit-world which is highly calculated to breed contempt, and to produce in the soul a kind of progressive spiritual stagnation and paralysis. Indeed, there is no form of human research which is so apt to engross and fascinate the mind and to absorb it to the exclusion of all other obligations and considerations. It seems as though each single new experiment created but an appetite for a further and a better one, and went but to stimulate that well-known "craving for phenomena" which can never be stilled. There are thousands of persons in England at this present time who, although fully convinced of the reality of spirit phenomena, and thoroughly acquainted with the manifold forms of occult manifestations, will nevertheless pass from séance to séance and from medium to medium, incessantly on the hunt after fresh evidence and ceaseless seeking for new and more exciting "developments." It would seem as though ever learning they were never coming to a knowledge of the truth, and as though every fresh evidence was but a means of suggesting a fresh doubt and of creating a new and greater misgiving.

And this craving for the abnormal, this ceaseless hunt after phenomena, is in itself calculated to injuriously affect the moral nature, to debase and to lower it, and to lead to that state of mind in which spirit-intercourse and "sittings" and "good phenomena" become an end in themselves, the one interesting and stimulating pursuit of life and the one means of satisfactorily solving all its difficulties and problems.

It was Judge Edmonds, the renowned American spiritist, who declared in one of his public lectures: —

"We have to contend against our own fanaticism; for I assure you from my own experience and observation that the fascination of this intercourse is so great that its tendency is to lead men away from their proper judgment and to instil a spirit of fanaticism most revolting to the calm and rational mind."

But more instructive and suggestive still is the testimony of persons who, at one time ardent spiritists, saw grounds, in later years, for reconsidering their position, and who, in the end, abandoned the spiritistic creed.

"Spirit communion," writes one,[1] "soon absorbs all the time, faculties, hopes, fears, and desires of its devotees, and herein lies one of the greatest dan-

[1] Henry M. Hugunin, *Spirit Possession*, published in Sycamore, Ill., U. S. A.

gers of spiritualism. Infatuated by communication with the unseen inhabitants of the hidden world, the medium loses his or her interest in the things pertaining to everyday life and interest. A soft and pleasing atmosphere appears to surround them. The realities of flesh and blood are lost in ideal dreaming and there is no incentive to break away from a state of existence so agreeable, no matter how monstrous are the delusions practised by the spirits. Their consciences are as callous as if seared with a hot iron, sin has to them lost its wickedness, and they are willing dupes to unseen beings who delight to control their every faculty. Very seldom has a full-fledged spiritualist been able to comprehend the necessity and blessedness of the religion of Jesus Christ, and to withdraw from the morbid conditions into which he has fallen. . . .

"For about three months I was in the power of spirits, having a dual existence, and greatly tormented by their contradictory and unsatisfactory operations. . . . They tormented me to a very severe extent, and I desired to be freed from them. I lost much of my confidence in them, and their blasphemy and uncleanness shocked me. But they were my constant companions. I could not get rid of them. They tempted me to suicide and murder, and to other sins. I was fearfully beset and bewildered and deluded. There was no human help for me. They led me into some extravagances of ac-

tion, and to believe, in a measure, a few of their delusions, often combining religion and devilry in a most surprising manner; but, after all, beyond a certain extent they could not influence me. A higher power controlled them. Almost any sin that I had committed of any importance the spirits paraded before me, so that I could read it as out of a book," etc.

In *Spiritualism Unveiled* we read the following testimony of a Dr. B. F. Hatch, formerly husband of the noted American trance medium, Mrs. Cora V. Hatch, and apparently for many years identified with that lady's public lecturing work: —

"The extensive opportunity which I have had, and that, too, among the first class of spiritualists, of learning its nature and results, I think will enable me to lay just claims to being a competent witness in the matter.

"I am afraid that what I have to say will offend many who are less acquainted with the phenomena than myself . . . but I write that the experienced may more fully comprehend the dangers attending it. I am frequently asked if I still believe in the phenomena of spiritualism? I answer, Yes. I should deem it more than a waste of time to write about what does not exist. . . . I have heard much of the improvement in individuals in consequence of a belief in spiritualism. With such I have

had no acquaintance. But I have known many whose integrity of character and uprightness of purpose rendered them worthy examples to all around, but who, on becoming mediums, and giving up their individuality, also gave up every sense of honour and decency. A less degree of severity in this remark will apply to a large class of both mediums and believers. There are thousands of high-minded and intelligent spiritualists who will agree with me that it is no slander in saying that the inculcation of no doctrines in this country (America) has ever shown such disastrous moral and social results as the spiritual theories. . . . For a long time I was swallowed up in its whirlpool of excitement, and comparatively paid but little attention to its evils, believing that much good might result from the opening up of the avenues of spiritual intercourse. But, during the past eight months, I have devoted my attention to a critical investigation of its moral, social, and religious bearings, and I stand appalled before the revelations of its awful and damning realities and would flee from its influence as I would from the miasma which would destroy both body and soul. . . . With but little inquiry I have been able to count up over seventy mediums, most of whom have wholly abandoned their conjugal relations, others living with their paramours called 'affinities,' others in promiscuous adultery, and still others exchanged partners. Old men and women,

who have passed the meridian of life, are not unfrequently the victims of this hallucination. Many of the mediums lose all sense of moral obligation and yield to whatever influence may for the time be brought to bear upon them. Their pledges, the integrity of their oaths, are no more reliable than the shifting breezes of the whirlwind, for they are made to yield to the powers which for the time control them."

The testimony of another former spiritualist is as follows: —

"After all our investigations, for seven or eight years, we must say that we have as much evidence that there are lying spirits as we have that there are any spirits at all . . . the doctrines they teach . . . are most contradictory and absurd. There are those . . . who have become and are becoming victims of a sensual philosophy under the influence of what is termed Spiritualism. . . . Spiritualism, in a very large class of mind, tends to beget a kind of moral and religious atheism."

But we have evidence nearer home which goes to indicate that the moral and mental dangers attending spiritistic practices are recognised by men well qualified to form an accurate judgment of the matter and to speak with authority. As far back as 1877 Dr. L. S. Forbes Winslow wrote in *Spiritualistic Madness:* —

"Ten thousand unfortunate people are at the present time confined in lunatic asylums on account of having tampered with the supernatural." And, quoting an American journal, he goes on to say: "Not a week passes in which we do not hear that some of these unfortunates destroy themselves by suicide, or are removed to a lunatic asylum. The mediums often manifest signs of an abnormal condition of their mental faculties, and among certain of them are found unequivocal indications of a true demoniacal possession. The evil spreads rapidly and it will produce in a few years frightful results. . . . Two French authors of spiritualistic works, who wrote *Le Monde Spirituel* and *Sauvons le genre humain,* died insane in an asylum; these two men were distinguished in their respective professions: one as a highly scientific man, the other as an advocate well learned in the law. These individuals placed themselves in communication with the spirits by means of tables. I could quote many such instances where men of the highest ability have, so to speak, neglected all and followed the doctrines of Spiritualism only to end their days in the lunatic asylums."

A little while ago a spiritist of many years' standing wrote to the present writer as follows: —

"I must admit that I have lately had many misgivings with regard to the advisability of any but

the sanest and strongest-minded dabbling in Spiritism. Since . . . I have had one very nasty experience, so I feel in honour bound to stop indiscriminate propaganda till I have thought it over. I ought to tell you of a striking confirmation I have received of your theory of personation," etc.

And a few months later: —

" I have given up going to séances, as it leads to nothing but mental confusion. I don't think I would even go to a materialisation, much as I should like it, as it affects my heart so much. I feel weak for three days after; besides there is nothing to be got from the tramps who come to the average séance."

Another correspondent writes: —

" In confirmation of your position I was told by a photographer in Tasmania, who had had much experience and who had been present when spirits materialised, that he had given it up because all the mediums he had known had 'gone wrong.' They had practically become slaves to the forces they first seemed to use."

A young officer describes his experiences as follows: —

" My first experiments with my planchette proved unsuccessful. After a time it certainly began to move, but the result was merely a set of curves or

lines over the paper. After a time, however, I found that it wrote words and phrases, and sometimes sense, sometimes otherwise. In one or two instances some rather startling answers were given — so startling, indeed, that I, who was at one time sceptical, now recoiled from the planchette in terror. However, fascination and curiosity soon overcame this, and I persevered. After a time I found that writing by means of this planchette affected me greatly. It gave me a feeling of intense nausea, and always brought on a tired and worn-out feeling. Also when I went to bed I could not sleep, and used to keep on fancying that there was someone else in the room. My nerves were all shaky, and I felt that I was no longer my own master. . . . To this day I am frequently subject to nervous depression and attacks of melancholia."

A medical man residing in the north of England, who describes himself as "one who has probed the whole subject to the bottom, and who knows both its weak and its strong points — who, in fact, devoted to its study and spread the best years of his life," strongly denounces the entire movement on account of the mental, moral, and physical perils attending it.

For reasons already indicated, the better portion of the material which has recently come into the

writer's possession, and which so strongly corroborates the position here taken up, cannot unfortunately be given to the public. The evidential force which this material possesses as a whole is almost overwhelming, and it would seem to cut away every inch of ground from underneath the spiritistic theory.

But that, in scientific quarters too, the grave perils attending spiritistic practices and the exercise of the mediumistic faculty are beginning to be recognised may be gathered from references incidentally occurring in the published writings of men prominently connected with psychical research, and especially from a little pamphlet by a Vice-President[1] of the Society for Psychical Research, which has already been referred to.

Thus Dr. Van Eeden, in concluding his paper read before the Fourth International Congress of Psychology in Paris in 1891, gave expression to the following weighty words: —

"At present I must conclude with the reflection that we have in the subject before us a region scarcely at all explored, full of interest, and without discernible limits. In this region there exist possibilities of observation, and even of experiment, on methodical and scientific lines. But therein also lie risks of error more serious than in any other de-

[1] Professor Barrett.

partment of science. And not merely of error, scientific and intellectual, but also of moral error. It is possible to construct hypotheses, religious eschatologies, according to taste, and the passive medium will exhibit your machineries in full function. It is this consideration which should make us prudent even to exaggeraton. And it is this which seems, indeed, to justify the orthodox religions in condemning the evocation of spirits as immoral, as infringing upon secrets hidden from man by the Eternal."

Professor Barrett, while insisting upon the right of science to investigate the phenomena, and while realising the importance of their bearing upon the great subject of the future life, is nevertheless constrained to utter the following warning[1]: —

"It is, of course, as true now as then (the times of the Hebrews) that these practices are dangerous in proportion as they lead us to surrender our reason or our will to the dictates of an invisible and oftentimes masquerading spirit, or as they absorb and engross us to the neglect of our daily duties, or as they tempt us to forsake the sure but arduous pathway of knowledge and of progress for *an enticing maze, which lures us round and round.* In fine, everything that invades the domain of reason and tends to displace it from its throne was condemned

[1] *Necromancy and Ancient Magic.*

by these virile, far-seeing prophets. We can hear them saying, ' Away with your portents and charms, away with your superstitious rites and observances, away with your slavery to muttering spirits, and fight the battle of life with the reason the Almighty has given you and in the consciousness and strength of His presence. . . .' "

For science generally the moral aspect of the subject of course does not exist, and it is scarcely from this quarter that we can hope for a right and wise judgment in the matter. For the ordinary psychical student it is solely a question of interesting phenomena and of the observation and examination of those phenomena. With their bearing upon the world's belief, or its moral and religious life, he has little inclination to concern himself. His interest is not unsimilar to that of the vivisectionist, who cares little for what may happen to the subject, so long as the experiment itself is successful and by its means some secret is wrested from nature or some new fact brought to light.

5. A fifth and perhaps still more fatal argument against the spiritistic theory is **the contradictory character of the teaching given by the intelligences.**

In order to fully appreciate the force of this objection it is necessary to bear in mind what the admitted claims of modern spiritism are. To put it briefly: the intelligences, who by the various means

described, seek communication with us, invariably claim that they are sent to us on a mission of instruction and enlightenment; that their chief aim and purpose is to convince a manifestly sceptical world of the existence of a future state and of the survival of the individual soul — of the consequent great and constant responsibility of life; that they desire to free the human mind from the bondage of errors and misconceptions created by human and imperfect creeds, and to lay the foundation for a truer and nobler philosophy of life and for a wider and broader and more inclusive religious faith.

There is scarcely a message, emanating from these mysterious operators, in which some such claim as this is not maintained or implied, and from which it may not be inferred that, as Mr. Stainton-Moses puts it, "the abnormal conditions produced by the action of spirit in this world are merely the phenomenal manifestations attendant on the close of one dispensation, era, or epoch, and the ushering in of a new régime, with wider spiritual knowledge and clearer insight into Truth."

"Spiritualism, in fact," as the same writer points out in another place, "comes as a revolutionary element to an age that is ripe for it, dealing, like that great movement of which it is the nineteenth-century analogue, with all the relations and inter-relations of man with man and man with God. . . .

Doubtless the time has not yet come when it is proper to pronounce any dogmatic opinions. The work of destruction must necessarily precede the work of construction, and if the destructive process be long and arduous, the excuse must be found in the fact that man has disguised God's truth so deeply and is so wedded to his inventions that it is not easy to disabuse him."

It is impossible, in the face of words like these, to misconceive the claims of Spiritism, or to suppose that there is, in the minds of those really speaking with authority, anything approaching the notion of compromise with existing religious ideas. It was Mr. Stainton-Moses himself who declared that the word spiritism stands for revolution, not simply reform, and that revolution is, it would seem, of an exceptionally radical and thorough-going character.

Now, whatever views we may be disposed to entertain as to the reasonableness of so great and momentous a claim, it is obvious that no rational man can be expected to proceed to its serious examination, unless there be a fulfilment of certain preliminary and necessary conditions.

Acceptance of a message, fraught with such immense importance to mankind, demands: —

1. That we should be able to identify the

messengers who bring it and who claim that they are the spirits of the dead.

2. That these messengers should be clearly shown to have the power and authority to convey such revolutionary disclosures to us.

3. That they should themselves be of a character corresponding to the moral and intellectual import of their message.

4. That their method of communication should be a reasonable and beneficent one.

5. That there should be agreement and uniformity in the respective messengers and in the character and substance of their message.

How far the first four of these conditions may be considered as fulfilled will have been gathered from what has been said in the preceding pages and from the evidence which has been adduced. And it cannot certainly be with any feeling of confidence, but, on the contrary, with one of the strongest possible misgiving, that we approach the examination of the fifth and last point — the question as to the character of the teaching conveyed by these spirit-messages.

And here, too, it has to be admitted that our misgivings find the fullest possible confirmation and justification, for, here too, we do not anywhere find ourselves on solid ground. On the contrary, vagueness, contradiction, and mystification surround us on

every side, and it would seem to be an utterly impossible thing to construct, from the mass of material at our disposal, anything approaching any clear and definite truth.

On the great subject of Religion, of man's duty towards God, the spirits are hopelessly at variance, and it is a well-known fact that, in reply to questions formulated with a view to eliciting a clear and unequivocal statement, the most unsatisfactory and contradictory answers are apt to be given. They teach one religion in America, another in England, another in France, and there is underlying these no single principle that would enable us to harmonise them or to deduce from them some simple and elementary truth.

Some spirits, for instance, teach universal reincarnation; others deny it. The spirits speaking through the mediumship of Allan Kardec in France, of Stainton-Moses in England, of Swedenborg in Sweden, of Mrs. Piper in America, have different and mutually contradictory information to impart, and could not possibly have drawn that information from a common source. The communications, conveyed through these respective mediums, would seem to reflect and to express some latent belief or subjective creed of the sensitive himself, rather than any objective truth universally known and understood in the world of spirit, and disclosed for the moral advancement and enlightenment of mankind.

On all minor points, such as the conditions pertaining to the future world, and our life in it after death, the same confusion and contradiction prevail, and it would be difficult for the mind most favourably disposed towards the spiritistic position to introduce anything like order into the chaos of conflicting ideas, or to exhibit any single statement in reference to the unseen world and its life, respecting which there can be shown to be absolute unanimity.

How grotesquely absurd and contradictory these communications are, may be gathered from a summary of spirit-teaching given by Dr. William Potter (at one time himself a spiritualist) in a volume entitled, *Spiritism as it is.*

"The teachings and theories given through the different manifestations," he writes, "are as various as it is possible to conceive. Indeed, few of the most devoted 'seekers after truth under difficulties' are aware of the endless contradictions and absurdities that are mixed up with the most exalted truths and the most profound philosophies. We have room for only a tithe of them, for we have not yet found the first question or subject about which they do not contradict each other. . . .

"We are taught that God is a person; that He is impersonal; that He is omnipotent; that He is governed by nature's laws; that everything is God; that there is no God; that we are gods. We are taught that the soul is eternal; that it commences its exist-

ence at conception, at birth, at maturity, at old age. That all are immortal, that some are immortal, that none are immortal. That the soul is a winged monad in the centre of the brain, that it gets tired, and goes down into the stomach to rest; that it is material, that it is immaterial; that it is unchangeable, that it changes like the body, that it dies with the body; that it develops the body, that it is developed by the body; that it is human in form; that it is in but one place at a time, that it is in all places at the same time.

"We are taught that the spirit-world is on earth — just above the air — beyond the milky way. That it has but one sphere, three spheres, six spheres, seven spheres, thirty-six spheres, an infinite number of spheres. That it is a real, tangible world; that it is all a creation of the mind of the beholder, and appears different to different spirits. That it is inhabited by animals, birds, etc.; that they do not inhabit it. That it is a sea of ether, that it is a plain, that it has mountains, lakes, and valleys, that it is a belt around the earth. We are taught that spirits eat food — live by absorption, live on magnetism, thoughts, love; that they control media by will-power, by magnetism, by entering media, by standing by their side, by an influence beyond our atmosphere, by permission of the Lord.

"We are taught that spirits converse by thought-reading, by oral language. That their music is har-

mony of soul — that it is instrumental and vocal. That they live single; in groups of nine. That they marry without having offspring; that they have offspring by mortals; that they have offspring by each other. That their marriage is temporal; that it is eternal. That spirits never live again in the flesh; that they do return and enter infant bodies, and live many lives in the flesh. That some are born first in the spheres, and afterwards on earth in the flesh. That the true affinity is born in the spirit-world at the same time that the counterpart is born on earth. That all spirits are good; that some are bad; that all progress, that some progress, that none progress.

. . .

"We are taught that there is no high, no low, no good, no bad. That murder is right, lying is right, slavery is right, adultery is right. That whatever is, is right. That nothing we can know can injure the soul or retard its progress. That it is wrong to blame any; that none should be punished; that man is a machine, and not to blame for his conduct.

. . .

"We are taught that the spirit of the tree exists in perfect form after the tree is burnt. That monads are God's thoughts, and go through all forms of rocks, trees, animals, and at last become men. That we see by a positive radiation that goes out from the eyes and touches things. That thoughts are living entities, and may flow down the

arm on to the paper; if that is burnt they float around. That spirit is substance in absolute condensation; that matter is substance whose particles never touch. That all earthly marriage is of the flesh, and must end; and that the true affinity is of a spirit mate, born at the same time in spirit-life that the counterpart is born on earth.

"*All the above teachings,* adds the author, *we have heard given by media or from communications.*"

The writer's own experience and research thoroughly confirm the accuracy of this very unique and typical summary, and although he fully admits that we do occasionally meet with intelligences which will give remarkably sensible and rational accounts of the other world and its life, and which will display a considerable amount of consistency and reasonableness in their statements and assertions, such statements can, nevertheless, in each single instance, be shown to be contradicted by some assertion on the same subject, made by a different intelligence and through the agency of a different sensitive.

Instances, too, are known in which a spirit-intelligence will make a communication to the effect that the teaching which he had received and imparted during his past earth-life, and in his capacity as a sensitive, had been disproved by personal experience gained after entrance into the spirit-world, and that

such false teaching was to be attributed to the operation of beings of a low order, abounding, it is declared, in the regions or spheres immediately surrounding this earth plane. Many cases of this kind are on record. That of the late Dr. Anna Kingsford occupied the attention of the spiritistic Press not so very long ago. Her spirit, communicating after its departure from the body, was reported to have disowned the better portion of what she had taught in the course of her supposed past earth-life.

A still more striking and recent instance of this kind is that of the late Mr. Stainton-Moses, which has already been referred to in connection with the problem of "spirit-identity," and which is recorded by Professor Newbold in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.*

The automatic messages received through the agency of this remarkable medium, and purporting to emanate from spirits of a very high order, have, as already pointed out, been epoch-making in their influence upon spiritistic thought and philosophy, and have, in their completed form, become a kind of Bible to all orthodox spiritists. The book has, in fact, been accepted as the best and most intelligent exposition of spiritistic belief, and as the most consistent and trustworthy account of other-world conditions and other-world life.

But, unfortunately in this instance too, certain subsequent disclosures, declared to be after-death

revelations of the same Stainton-Moses, but, in any case, communications emanating from the spirit-world and from spirit-intelligences, disown the accuracy of an important part of the previous "teachings," and exhibit the utter untrustworthiness of messages of even this higher order. The following is Professor Romaine Newbold's account of the matter: —

"'George Pelham'" (a spirit-intelligence) is telling Professor Newbold how the future state of the soul is affected by its earthly life —

"'It is only the body that sins, and not the soul.'"

"*Professor N.:* 'Does the soul carry with it into its new life all its passions and animal appetites?'

"*G. P.:* 'Oh no, indeed; not at all. Why, my good friend and scholar, you would have this world of ours a decidedly material one if it were so.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Do you know of Stainton-Moses?'

"*G. P.:* 'No, not very much. Why?'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Did you ever know of him, or know what he did?'

"*G. P.:* 'I only have an idea from having met him here.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Can you tell me what he said?'

"*G. P.:* 'No; only that he was Mr. Stainton-Moses. I found him for "E" and Hodgson.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Did you tell Hodgson this?'

"*G. P.:* 'I do not think so.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Did he say anything about his mediumship?'

"*G. P.:* 'No.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'His writings claimed that the soul carried with it all its passions and appetites, and was very slowly purified of them.'" [1]

[1] The original "teaching" on the two points here referred to, and conveyed by the high intelligences through the mediumship of Stainton-Moses during his lifetime, is as follows:—

I. "As the soul lives in the earth-life, so does it go to the spirit-life. Its tastes, its predilections, its habits, its antipathies, they are with it still. It is not changed save in the accident of being freed from the body. The soul that on earth has been low in taste and impure in habit, does not change its nature by passing from the earth-sphere, any more than the soul that has been truthful, pure, and progressive, becomes base and bad by death. Wonderful that you do not recognise this truth! You would not fancy a pure and upright soul degenerating after it has passed from your gaze. Yet you fable a purification of that which has become by habit impure and unholy, hating God and goodness and choosing sensuality and sin. The one is no more possible than the other. The soul's character has been a daily, hourly growth. It has not been an overlaying of the soul with that which can be thrown off. Rather it has been a weaving into the nature of the spirit that which becomes part of itself, identified with its nature, inseparable from its character. It is no more possible that that character should be undone, save by the slow process of obliteration, than that the woven fabric should be rudely cut and the threads remain intact.

II. "These earth-bound spirits retain much of their earthly passions and propensity. The cravings of the body are not extinct, though the power to gratify them is withdrawn. The drunkard retains his old thirst, but exaggerated, aggravated by the impossibility of slaking it. It burns within him,

"*G. P.*: 'IT IS ALL UNTRUE.'

"*Prof. N.*: 'And that the souls of the dead hover over the earth, goading sinners on to their own destruction.'

the unquenched desire, and urges him to frequent the haunts of his old vices, and to drive wretches like himself to further degradation. In them he lives again his old life and drinks in satisfaction, grim and devilish, from the excesses which he causes them to commit. And so his vice perpetuates itself, and swells the crop of sin and sorrow. The besotted wretch, goaded on by agencies he cannot see, sinks deeper and deeper into the mire. His innocent wife and babe starve and weep in silent agony, and near them hovers, and over them broods, the guardian angel who has no power to reach the sodden wretch who wears their lives and breaks their hearts.

"This we shadow forth to you when we tell you that the earthbound spirit lives again its life of excess in the excesses of those whom it is enabled to drive to ruin. . . .

"Round the gin shops of your cities, dens of vice, haunted by miserable besotted wretches, lost to self-respect and sense of shame, hover the spirits who in the flesh were lovers of drunkenness and debauchery. They lived the drunkard's life in the body, they live it over again now, and gloat with fiendish glee over the downward course of the spirit whom they are leagued to ruin. Could you but see how in spots where the vicious congregate the dark spirits throng, you would know something of the mystery of evil. It is the influence of these debased spirits which tends so much to aggravate the difficulty of retracing lost steps, which makes the descent of Avernus so easy, the return so toilsome. The slopes of Avernus are dotted with spirits hurrying to their destruction, sinking with mad haste to ruin. Each is the centre of a lot of malignant spirits, who find their joy in wrecking souls and dragging them down to their own miserable level," etc.

"*G. P.:* 'Not so. Not at (all) so. I claim to understand this, and it is emphatically not so. Sinners are sinners only in one life.'"

June 20th, 1895.

"*Prof. N.:* 'Can you bring Stainton-Moses here?'

"*G. P.:* 'I will do my best.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Is he far advanced?'

"*G. P.:* 'Oh no; I should say not. He will have to think for awhile yet.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'What do you mean?'

"*G. P.:* 'Well, have you forgotten all I told you before?'

"*Prof. N.:* 'You mean about progression by repentance?'

"*G. P.:* 'Certainly I do.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Wasn't he good?'

"*G. P.:* 'Yes, but not perfect by any means.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Was he a true medium?'

"*G. P.:* 'True! yes, very true.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Had he light?'

"*G. P.:* 'Yes.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Yet not all true.'

"*G. P.:* 'Yes, but his light was very true, yet he made a great many mistakes and deceived himself.'"

At the close of the sitting.

"*Prof. N.:* 'I want to see Stainton-Moses.'

"*G. P.:* 'Well, if I do not bring him do not be disappointed, because I will, if I can, find him.'"

June 21st, 1895.

Professor Newbold asked again about Stainton-Moses, but "G. P." explained that "he was not in his surroundings yet."

June 22nd, 1895.

"*G. P.:* 'Here is Stainton-Moses. Do you wish to see him?'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Tell him I have read with interest his book *Spirit Teaching*, but find in it statements apparently inconsistent with what you say; and I would like to know his explanation of the fact.'

"*Stainton-Moses:* 'Believe you in me and my teachings?'

"*Prof. N.:* 'I was much impressed with them, Mr. Moses, especially as your statements and Mr. Pelham's agree in the main. But how about the inconsistencies?'

"*Stn.-Moses:* 'Contradict the genuine statements made by our friend Pelham, whom I am delighted to meet?'

"*Prof. N.:* 'I did not say contradict; although it appears so. Can you explain them?'

"*Stn.-Moses:* 'I do not understand your question.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'Will you explain these seeming contradictions?'

"*Stn.-Moses:* 'What are they, please, sir?'

"*Prof. N.:* 'You taught that evil spirits tempt sinners to their own destruction?'

"*Stn.-Moses:* 'I have found out differently since I came over here. This particular statement, given me by my friends as their medium when I was in the body, is NOT TRUE.'

"*Prof. N.:* 'The second is that the soul carries its passions and appetites with it.'

"*Stn.-Moses:* 'Material passions. Untrue. It is not so. I have found out the difference.'"

There is, perhaps, no case on record which so clearly illustrates the difficulty here referred to, and the utter untrustworthiness of the communications received from the spirit-world. In this case the subject with which these respective spirit communications deal, can scarcely be said to be one of secondary importance only, or one on which even a disembodied spirit might be expected to preserve an open mind, or on which he might, after a few years' stay in the spirit-world, be expected to remain in comparative ignorance. On the contrary, it is a subject of the highest possible importance, and one directly bearing upon man's spiritual life both here and hereafter. It is, moreover, one connected with the constant personal experience of the spirit himself, and consequently one on which that spirit must

be expected to possess immediate and very accurate knowledge.

The intelligences, who in the first instance make the disclosure, claim to be spirits of a very high order, who have themselves passed long ages in the spirit-world, and who in their capacity as the appointed teachers of benighted humanity, may be supposed to have themselves accurate information as to spirit-world states and spirit-world life.

The disclosures which they make are clear and definite and emphatic, and, in the opinion of the sensitive through whom they are made, so reasonable and convincing and so intelligently connected with other disclosures of a similar kind that, after a severe mental conflict, he is induced to accept them and to set them before his disciples as great and most valuable truths.

The sensitive himself is admittedly a person of high integrity, fully conscious of the immense importance of the subject, and throughout guided by the highest and best of motives. He admits the disclosure received to be in no sense due to any abnormal action of his own subconscious mind, and to be exercising a revolutionary effect upon his religious and intellectual life.

After his release from the body this sensitive communicates through another sensitive of similar high standing and integrity and in the presence of scientists well qualified to distinguish the true from

the spurious, and themselves convinced of the identity of at least one spirit-intelligence, "George Pelham," which again vouches for the identity of the communicator with that of the deceased Stainton-Moses.

We have surely here the most favourable circumstances conceivable for the transmission of a clear and consistent spirit-message, and for the confirmation of the truth of that message on the part of the individual who in earth-life was instrumental in eliciting it. We have an instance, in fact, in which the spirit-intelligences are given a splendid opportunity of exhibiting the identity of their ideas and aims, their integrity and their unanimity as to the truths which they declare to be commissioned to impart.

But what do we find? The discarnate sensitive, on the grounds of his now personal experience and immediate knowledge of the other state, disowns the truth of the disclosures made to him and through him during his earth-life, and deliberately declares that all that has been said on a particular subject by the high intelligences is untrue. The "high intelligences" themselves, as will have been seen from what has been said on p. 134, etc., when they can be got to communicate, are unable to identify themselves by disclosing the names which in the lifetime of the sensitive they declared to have been their former earth-names.

It is unnecessary to further comment upon an occurrence of this kind which is but typical of what is constantly being experienced in the course of spiritistic experiments and investigations. The difficulty remains, from whatever point of view we may be disposed to look at it, and that difficulty can only be escaped by those whose minds are inaccessible to the force of evidence, and whose conclusions are established upon feeling and sentiment rather than upon truth and fact.

"If 'Imperator' and his assistants," writes Dr. Walter Leaf, in an incidental reference to this case in the most recent issue of the *Proceedings*, "if 'Imperator' and his assistants are really discarnate personalities they are lying spirits." But Imperator and his assistants are the highest and most consistent intelligences that have ever communicated from the spirit-world, and it is upon their communications and "Teachings" that the creed and philosophy of Modern Spiritism has in large measure constructed itself.

And if the best and most plausible communications hitherto received from the spirit-world are shown to be vague, self-contradictory and untrustworthy, the claim of their authors as to their high and exalted mission, and as to the purity and integrity of their aims, surely falls to the ground, and the greatest stumbling-block possible is placed in the way of acceptance of the spiritistic theory.

That theory, indeed, utterly breaks down when it is fully and fairly tested by its own evidence, for to the mind still free from prepossessions and capable of estimating the weight and bearing of evidence, it would seem to be impossible to think of the dead as the originators of these mysterious communications, and of the moral and intellectual confusion and chaos necessarily resulting from them.

VI

THE SPIRITISTIC CREED AND PHILOSOPHY

IT is a remarkable circumstance that, in spite of the inconsistent and wholly unreliable character of the "disclosure" habitually made by the intelligences claiming to be the spirits of the dead, there has nevertheless grown up a distinctive creed or spirit-philosophy which may, in a sense, be said to have its origin in and to be based upon these disclosures.

The explanation of this is, in the writer's opinion, to be found in the fact that, while no kind of oneness of idea or principle, in the matter of clear and positive teaching, can be found to be underlying these various spirit-messages, there is nevertheless a constant and remarkable unanimity in them on their negative side — in the bearing of their contents upon accepted beliefs and upon the traditional creed of Christendom.

The modern spiritist is, in respect of all definite dogmatic belief, an eclectic. He teaches that all the world's creeds, Christianity included, contain in them elements of truth and of good, that these ele-

ments have, however, come to be mixed up with so much that is erroneous and human, that only specially enlightened souls, in particular "advanced spirits," are capable of distinguishing the wheat from the chaff, and that it is only by the progressive enlightenment of the intellect and by a process of inward purification that all will ultimately come to know the true from the false. The light of truth, in fact, having of necessity and in each single instance, passed through imperfect channels, through media little qualified to transmit it and themselves intermingling it with elements and interpretations of their own, has become distorted in its passage and has in consequence brought but a very partial and imperfect illumination. Subsequent theological and philosophical speculations have tended to still further obscure it. "The assumption, therefore," say the spirits, "that any one religion which may commend itself to any one race, in any portion of your globe, has a monopoly of divine truth, is a human fiction born of men's vanity and pride."

Another element which has largely entered into the composition of the spirit-creed, and from which it has received a vast amount of vitality and support, is the scientific doctrine of evolution, of the slow and progressive ascent and development of human life, the universal law of adaptation to and correspondence with environment, the survival of the fittest, the steady advance from a lower to a higher

scale of moral and intellectual life and being. It is, at least, in its bearing upon and application to the spirit-life and the spirit-world that this theory of development has found favour amongst spiritists, and that we find it permeating and underlying all their statements and writings. Thus the main doctrines of the new spirit-religion are, as Professor A. R. Wallace puts it in his book: —

"That after death man's spirit survives in an ethereal body, gifted with new powers but mentally and morally the same individual as when clothed in flesh. *That he commences from that moment a course of apparently endless progression,* which is rapid just in proportion as his mental and moral faculties have been exercised and cultivated while on earth. That his comparative happiness or misery will depend entirely on himself. Just in proportion as all his higher human faculties have taken part in all his pleasures here, will he find himself contented and happy in a state of existence in which they will have the fullest exercise. While he who has depended more on the body than on the mind for his pleasures, will, when the body is no more, feel a grievous want, and must slowly and painfully develop his intellectual and moral nature till its exercise shall become easy and pleasurable. Neither punishments nor rewards are meted out by an external power, but each one's condition is the natural and inevitable sequence of his condition here. He

starts again from the level of moral and intellectual development to which he had raised himself while on earth" (pp. 115, 116).

It is by the importation of these principles, together with some elements of theosophical teaching, into a system of ethical thought retaining some few fragments of distinctly Christian doctrine, that a creed has come to be formed which claims to satisfy the intellectual as well as the religious side of human nature, and to present us with a rational, consistent, and highly intelligible view of man and of his destiny — which furnishes, according to Professor Wallace, "a more intelligible, consistent, and harmonious theory of the future state of man than either religion or philosophy has yet put forth."

The spirit-creed, then, being as free from religious dogmatism as any creed can well be, may be said to be in the truest sense a child of the age, an adaptation to and expression of the peculiar mental tendencies of the times, and it is certainly in those ideas and tendencies that it lives and moves and has its being. It is its large-heartedness, its freedom from all intellectual restraints, its marvellous adaptability and "comprehensiveness," that constitute its chief characteristics and that make it the pride and glory of the modern spiritist.

Acknowledge but that the human spirit survives the dissolution of the body, that it enters immediately after death upon a process of progressive edu-

cation and evolution, and that it can, under favourable conditions, communicate with those left behind on earth, and the standard of spiritistic orthodoxy will be most amply complied with. All other matters are of secondary importance and of very little account, and respecting them the utmost freedom may be allowed to human thought and speculation.

Thus, as regards the ultimate Source and Cause of all things, the predominating mental attitude amongst spiritists, is the agnostic one. The true spiritist will say that he does not and cannot know. He holds that all the received views on this point have their origin in purely subjective and anthropomorphic conceptions, and that they are of necessity unreliable and misleading. In his view, the human mind, with its limited powers, is not capable, in its present stage of development, of penetrating into this mystery and of apprehending the truth, even if it were disclosed, and the probability is that ages upon ages will have to pass, and incarnations and developments innumerable will have to be gone through before its knowledge on this subject will have advanced in any appreciable measure. Perhaps it will never know.

The " higher intelligences," while accommodating themselves to the common belief and speaking in terms of personality of the Deity, really support this view and declare that they themselves, al-

though many long years in the spirit-world, have not really attained to any truer and fuller knowledge of God. And no spirit communicating with earth pretends to have seen Him, or to have penetrated to His presence.

"We have not seen Him (God)," writes Imperator, "nor do we hope yet to approach His presence. Millions of ages, as you count time, must run their course, and be succeeded by yet again myriads upon myriads, ere the perfected spirit — perfected through suffering and experience — can enter into the inner sanctuary to dwell in the presence of the All-pure, All-holy, All-perfect God."

Many modern spiritists, of course, have retained the belief of their earlier days and acknowledge the One Personal God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, Who has from time to time disclosed truth to man as man has been able to bear it and in proportion as he has fitted himself for its reception — Who is, in these present days, continually disclosing it by His spirit-messengers. But, speaking generally, the views of spiritists on this subject differ as widely as can well be conceived, and almost any view, from the most extreme form of pantheism on the one side to the belief of the educated unitarian on the other, find a place and acceptance in the spiritistic system.

Agreement can be said to exist on one point only,

namely, that the historic Christian doctrine respecting the nature and character of the Deity, is an imposition, the fabric of an artificial scholastic philosophy, and contradicted by sound reason as well as by the unanimous testimony of the spirit-world.

It is certainly a remarkable fact that on this point the higher intelligences are strangely unanimous and emphatic in their statements, and all spiritualists are agreed.

"When you rashly complain of us," writes Imperator, "that our teaching to you controverts that of the Old Testament, we can but answer that it does indeed controvert that old and repulsive view of the good God, which made Him an angry, jealous, human tyrant; but that it is in fullest accord with that divinely inspired revelation of Himself which He gave through Jesus Christ — a revelation *which man has done so much to debase, and from which the best of the followers of Christ have so grievously fallen away.* . . .

"Your sacred records tell you how, at the sepulchre of Jesus, the angel message to the sorrowing friend was one of aspiration. 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, He is risen.' So, friend, we say to you. Why linger in the dead past, the sepulchre of buried truth, seeking, in fruitless sorrow, for that which is no longer there? It is not there, it is risen. It has left the

body of dogmatic teaching, which once for a restless age enshrined Divine Truth. There remains but the dead casket, the jewel is gone. The spirit has risen, and lo! we proclaim to you sublime truth, a nobler creed and a Divine God. We proclaim to you a spiritualised religion, we call you from the dead formalism, the lifeless, loveless liberalism of the past, to a religion of spiritualised truth, to the lovely symbolism of angel teaching, to the higher planes of spirit, where the material finds no place and the formal dogmatism of the past is forever gone."

"Our modern religious teachers maintain," writes Professor A. R. Wallace, "that they know a great deal about God. They define minutely and critically His various attributes; they enter into His motives, His feelings, and His opinions; they explain exactly what He has done and why He has done it, and they declare that after death we shall be with Him and shall see and know Him.

"In the teaching of the spirits there is not a word of all this. They tell us that they commune with higher intelligences than themselves, but of God they really know no more than we do. They say that above these higher intelligences are others higher and higher, in apparently endless gradation, but so far as they know, no absolute knowledge of the Deity Himself is claimed by any of them."

Regarding man and his origin there is a similar diversity of view amongst spiritists. A considerable proportion of them have a leaning towards theosophical teaching and accept the theosophical doctrine of reincarnation. They believe that each human soul which appears upon the earth, had a pre-existence in the spirit-spheres and has passed through previous earth-lives, bringing with it some fragments of recollection of those lives, revived sometimes in abnormal mind or dream states, and in those conditions of mental passivity which are induced by hypnotic and other occult practices.

In France this view is the predominating one, French spiritism being largely founded upon the communication received through the mediumship of Allan Kardec, himself a reincarnationist. In England, America, and Germany the spirits, generally speaking, either deny reincarnation or declare that it is a subject on which they have and can have no definite and accurate knowledge.

But whether reincarnation be accepted or not, spiritists teach that each individual man, as he appears upon this earth is, in the truest sense, an incarnation, the spirit or ego originating in the spirit-world, the body an organism by long processes of development prepared for its ultimate high purpose.

Spiritists, therefore, while thorough believers in the general doctrine of development, are by no means extreme evolutionists. On the contrary, they

maintain that no degree or process of organic development could by any possible chance have produced thought and spirit and consciousness, and that the origin of the human ego, of the true conscious and reasoning self must, in any case, be sought for in the spirit-world, amidst spiritual and incorporeal conditions. It is by its temporary association and blending with a frail earthly body that its training and education are effected and that its ultimate destiny is worked out.

Thus man is conceived of as standing between two worlds and two states of being: linked on the one hand with the world of spirit, with all that is good, and true, and noble, and elevating; on the other with the world of matter, with the vile, the low, the earthly, and the debasing. Gifted with free will, he has to make his choice, has to determine for himself which way he will walk, to which set of conditions and environments he will conform and adapt himself.

There is the world of spirit offering him its best and highest, its most satisfying and enduring treasures. It is in constant operation upon his better nature, reminding him of his true origin and his high destiny, of the happiness and satisfaction to be found in cultivating the soul's life, in seeking communion with and instruction from the spirit-world, and in thus gradually fitting himself for life in the highest spirit-spheres hereafter.

A host of spiritual beings, many of whom have, like himself, passed through the process of earth purification, and who are, by reason of certain similarities of temperament and disposition, in rapport or affinity with him, attend him and watch over his every step. They do not interfere with his free will and choice, but they suggest good and pure thoughts; they strengthen each upward impulse, each earnest effort, each deliberate determination to resist the lower tendencies and to obey the higher. They are able and anxious to come in more direct touch with him, if he will give the necessary opportunities, if he will cultivate or rather allow them to cultivate, certain powers and possibilities latent in him, if he will trustfully submit himself to their influence and ruling. They will, by visible tangible signs and tokens, give him proof and evidence that they are living, independent beings, and they will, in the course of time, bring him in touch with and open his mind to the secrets of the spirit-spheres and the spirit-life.

There is, on the other hand, the world of matter, of the lower earthly influences, touching the other side of his nature and of his being. This world, being intimately linked with the life of the body and of the senses, is the stronger one of the two. Its claims are incessant and imperative and, by reason of the constitution of our human nature, much more

readily obeyed than those of the higher order. There are the appetites and lusts and passions inherent in and dominating the flesh, powerfully and unceasingly exercising their fatal spells and fascinations. There are the allurements and temptations of the world without: its distinctions and honours and possessions.

There is the world of spiritual evil, of low spirit-intelligences linked with this world of matter, and operating upon it by means of these natural tendencies and dispositions, intensifying them if possible, and getting in on the very current of our life and of our being. And the law determining human relationship with this lower world of spirit is that of correspondence or affinity — of similarity of taste and temperament and aim and disposition.

Thus, according to the teaching of the spirits, the sensualist or profligate, wholly obeying the lower instincts of his nature, will not only estrange from himself and from his soul's life the higher intelligences who cannot penetrate into the unfavourable moral sphere environing him and created by him, but he will attract to himself intelligences of a like sensual order, whose passions have survived the decease of the body and who, forevermore in search for opportunities of gratifying them, will attach themselves to him, and will endeavour to participate in his delights. They will exercise their influence by fanning his passions and by stimulating

his cravings, and by filling his mind with pictures and images leading to fresh indulgences and debaucheries. They will, in the course of time, become his constant attendants and companions, in many instances reducing him to the position of a mere tool and bond-slave.

The higher intelligences, unable to enter the atmosphere of evil thus created, and to sufficiently impress the mind of the victim with the thought of better things and of the evils and folly of such a course, will be compelled, after a while, to withdraw from such a soul, and to leave it, however reluctantly, to its own misery and destiny.

In the same way, all human passions and earthward tendencies, such as anger and malice and envy, the lust for money or for power or worldly possession, for mere intellectual attainments and achievements, have, it is declared, their counterpart in the spirit-spheres, provoking the operation of beings of a like order and disposition, and placing the person, enslaved by such propensities, in correspondence and affinity with them. As in the higher so in this lower world of spiritual forces and influences, the law of order and of harmony reigns, and it is by the unerring action of that law that man is silently and gradually, but nevertheless effectually and surely, shaping his life and determining his destiny. He is fitting himself by "adaptation to environment" either for a progressive existence in the

higher spirit-spheres, for the companionship of and intercourse with the high, the good, the true and the pure, or he is certainly and constantly tending downwards, daily and hourly becoming more and more "unfit," and preparing for himself a future of unceasing regrets, disappointment, and suffering.

"The spirit," writes Professor Wallace, "which has lived and developed its powers clothed with a human body, will, when it leaves that body, still retain its former modes of thought, its former tastes, feelings, and affections. The new state of existence is a natural continuation of the old one. There is no sudden acquisition of new mental proclivities, no revolution of the moral nature. Just what the embodied spirit had made itself, or had become, *that* is the embodied spirit when it begins its life under new conditions. It is the same in character as before, but it has acquired new physical and mental powers, new modes of manifesting the moral sentiment, wider capacity for acquiring physical and spiritual knowledge." [1]

"As the soul," writes Imperator, "lives in the earth-life, so does it go to the spirit-life. Its tastes, its predilections, its habits, its antipathies, they are with it still. It is not changed save in the accident of being freed from the body. The soul that on earth has been low in tastes and impure in habit,

[1] p. 109.

does not change its nature by passing from the earth-sphere, any more than the soul that has been truthful, pure, and progressive, becomes base and bad by death. Wonderful that you do not recognise this truth! You would not fancy a pure and upright soul degenerating after it has passed from your gaze. Yet you fable a purification of that which has become by habit impure and unholy, hating God and goodness, and choosing sensuality and sin. The one is no more possible than the other. The soul's character has been a daily, hourly growth. It has not been an overlaying of the soul with that which can be thrown off. Rather it has been a weaving into the nature of the spirit that which becomes part of itself, identified with its nature, inseparable from its character. It is no more possible that that character should be undone, save by the slow process of obliteration, than that the woven fabric should be rudely cut and the threads remain intact. Nay more. The soul has cultivated habits that have become so ingrained as to be essential parts of its individuality. The spirit that has yielded to the lusts of a sensual body becomes in the end their slave. It would not be happy in the midst of purity and refinement. It would sigh for its old haunts and habits. They are of its essence. So you see that the legions of the adversaries are simply the masses of unprogressed, undeveloped spirits, who have banded together from

affinity against all that is pure and good. They can only progress by penitence, through the instruction of higher intelligences, and by gradual and laborious undoing of sin and sinful habit. . . ."

We have here, it is asserted by spiritists, the true explanation of the undeniable circumstance that by far the larger proportion of spiritistic phenomena are of a trivial order, and that the intelligences exhibiting them would seem to be of a low moral and intellectual character. These intelligences represent, they say, that preponderating class of trivial and "undeveloped" human beings who are daily passing over into the spirit-world, and who are being drawn back into those conditions and environments with which they are in correspondence and affinity. It is not really so much with them that the fault lies, but rather with those thoughtless investigators who, from mere motives of curiosity and excitement, and without any knowledge of the laws regulating intercourse with the spirit-world, will venture upon these — for them — more than perilous experiments. How far the actual facts of the case can be said to bear out the truth of this assertion will have been seen from other portions of this work.

The state of the human spirit in the other world, then, while in large measure self-created and self-

induced, is, according to the spirit-creed, in no sense a fixed and permanent one. On the contrary, it is one of unceasing education and of possible adaptation to new conditions and environments. For the most debased and sin-fettered spirit, progress and advancement become possible the moment that he realises the extent of his loss and of his misery, and that there rises up within him the desire to repent and, so far as that may be possible, to undo the past. Such repentance may not, in the new incorporeal condition, be such an easy and simple thing as it was in the life of the body; there may be keen and long-continued suffering to be gone through; it may be a hard and painful thing for the enslaved spirit to initiate within himself thoughts of and desires for better things; but the change begins the moment such thoughts begin to take shape and to manifest themselves. Higher intelligences begin to draw near; they surround the spirit with pure and helpful influences going to confirm and strengthen the new impulse. They point out the difficulty, but at the same time, the happiness of such upward striving; they constitute themselves his teachers and ministers, and after a while, if the work of repentance be genuine and sincere, they bear him away to advanced spheres, and to happier and more helpful conditions of life and environment.

" When the desire arises," writes Imperator, " the spirit makes its first step. It becomes amenable to

holy and ennobling influence, and is tended by those pure and self-sacrificing spirits whose mission it is to tend such souls. You have among you spirits bright and noble, whose mission in the earth-life is among the dens of infamy and haunts of vice, and who are preparing for themselves a crown of glory, whose brightest jewels are self-sacrifice and love.[1] So amongst us there are spirits who give themselves to work in the sphere of the degraded and abandoned. By their efforts many spirits rise, and when rescued from degradation, work out long and laborious purification in the probation spheres, where they are removed from influences of evil and entrusted to the care of the pure and good. So desire for holiness is encouraged and the spirit is purified. . . .

"Of punishment we know indeed, but it is not the vindictive lash of an angry God, but the natural outcome of conscious sin, remediable by repentance and atonement and reparation, personally wrought out in pain and shame, not by coward cries for mercy, and by feigned assent to statements which ought to create a shudder."

[1] "Spirits of the higher spheres can and do sometimes communicate with those below, but those latter cannot at will with those above. But there is for all an eternal progress, a progress solely dependent on the power of will in the development of spirit nature. There are no evil spirits but the spirits of bad men, and even the worst are surely if slowly progressing" (A. R. Wallace).

Thus the modern spirit-creed, thoroughly accepting the general doctrine of evolution, of the slow and laborious ascent of life, uncompromisingly rejects the doctrine of the Fall of Man in the sense in which Christianity in all times and ages has received and taught it. Man, the spiritist teaches, has not *lapsed* from a state of supernatural grace, of spiritual knowledge and insight, from the life of intimate union and fellowship with his Creator; but he is slowly and painfully *ascending* out of low and earthly conditions and tendencies to some such high goal and destiny, and what there is in him of evil and of wickedness is not the result of wilful rebellion against the known will and law of the Eternal Cause, but the inevitable consequence of ignorance and blindness, of the love and pursuit of the animal and physical rather than of the heavenly and spiritual. And the pain and suffering which this process of progressive evolution involves are not to be regarded as penalties inflicted for the transgression of known laws, but as the effective instruments of education and enlightenment, as the means of purifying the human spirit from earthly and debasing tendencies and of leading him to know himself and the true end and purpose of his life. Suffering ceases in proportion as the soul emancipates itself from the bondage of the lower conditions and advances to the higher, and there is no offended God to be reconciled, no mysterious sin-offering to be

made, but a higher law to be discovered and to be obeyed, a truer knowledge of self and of the universe to be attained — adaptation to higher conditions and environments to be striven for and to be aimed at.

Repentance and sorrow for sin, both here and hereafter are, for the spiritist too, desirable and necessary conditions of mind and of soul; but they have reference to the human side of things only. It is the repentance consequent upon the consciousness of wasted time and opportunities, of the process of soul-education rendered unnecessarily painful and protracted and laborious — it is the sorrow for sin following upon an experience of the painful consequences attending it.

While thus a semblance of the historic doctrine of the Fall is retained and taught by the spiritist, and the earthward tendencies of the human heart and the laboriousness of the upward process are constantly insisted upon, the very essence and principle of the doctrine — the deliberate transgression of the known Divine law and the fatal consequence resulting therefrom — are denied or interpreted away as the invention of the infant human mind based upon primitive and unreliable traditions, or as the equally unreliable traditions of a mystical and speculative theology.

"For the present you may know," wrote the "higher spirits" through the hand of Mr. Stain-

ton-Moses, " that the theological story of a fall from a state of purity to a state of sin, as usually detailed and accepted, is misleading."

It will be seen that in such a system of progressive educational evolution there can be no real place for the Christian scheme of Redemption with its doctrines of human rebellion against recognised Divine authority, of atonement for sin made by the God-man, of restoration to the favour of God and eternal salvation for those consciously and penitently, and on the terms disclosed by Almighty God, participating in the benefits of that Atonement. There can be no room in it for the supernatural truths of Revelation and the historic creed of Christendom. It is only those fragments of Christian teaching which remain when these truths have been got rid of, and which can be fitted in with the spirit-creed, for which a Divine origin is claimed and to which anything like a Divine authority is ascribed. The rest is looked upon as the after-thought of theology, as mere accretions which, by the processes of human thought and speculation, and by the tendency of the human mind to mystify itself and to pervert things, have, in the course of ages, come to adhere to the simple truths disclosed by Christ — the great Medium and Seer — and which have been so instrumental in hiding God's light from the world and in hindering its true progress and advancement.

It is the mission of the higher spirit-intelligences. now so increasingly communicating with persons ready and fitted to receive their communications, to once more proclaim these simple truths, to free the human mind from the bondage of man-made creeds and theologies, and to supply such supplementary teaching as enlightened individuals here and there, in advance of their time and generation, may be urgently calling for.

"The time," said the spirits to Mr. Stainton-Moses, "is far nearer than you think, when the old faith which has worn so long, and which man has patched so clumsily, will be replaced by a higher and nobler one — one not antagonistic but supplementary — and the pure gospel which Jesus preached shall find its counterpart again on an advanced plane of knowledge. . . . Even as He, the Lamb of God, the Saviour of men, rescued Divine truth from Jewish ignorance and superstition, so do we rescue Divine verities from the crushing weight of man's theology. . . .

"The Christ-idea, the spiritual truth that He proclaimed is dragging out a lingering life choked by the weeds of sacerdotalism and human theology. . . . ."[1]

[1] The spirits insist that this mission of illumination is to advanced and enlightened souls only, to persons who are chafing under, and who have "outgrown" the bondage of creeds, and who are thoroughly prepared to receive a higher

As to the doctrine of the Atonement, the spirits are exceptionally clear and emphatic, and respecting it the modern spiritist entertains the most pronounced and uncompromising views. The entire conception of the shedding of blood and of the surrender of life as a means of reconciliation between God and man is a notion abhorrent to the spirit-world — a doctrine declared to have its origin in heathen rites and superstitions, and to have been imported into the Christian system from those impure sources. Spiritists maintain that it is to the later theological and philosophical speculations, and to some fragments of those earlier beliefs inherent in us, not to the words of Christ Himself, that the formulation of this repulsive doctrine is to be ascribed.

"Little," say the spirits, "do men grasp the significance of the truth to which they carelessly give utterance when they say that Christ came into the world to die for it. He did so come; but in the

and purer truth. They point out that the forcing of such truth on unprepared minds not only causes violence to be done to truth itself, but harm great and far-reaching to those not really capable of assimilating it.

"There are many," they say, "to whom the gospel given of old is satisfying yet, and who are not receptive of further truth. With these we meddle not. But many there are who have learned what the past can teach, and who are thirsting for further knowledge. To these it is given in such measure as the Most High sees fit," etc.

sense of these enthusiasts He came not. The drama of Calvary was of man's, not God's devising."

"It was not the eternal purpose of God that Jesus should die when the work of the Christ was but just commencing. That was man's work, foul, evil, accursed. Christ came to die for and to save man in the same, though in a higher sense, that all regenerators of men have been their saviours, and yielded up bodily existence in devotion to an overmastering idea. In this sense He came to save and die for men; but in the sense that the scene on Calvary was preordained to occur when man consummated his foul deed, He came not. And this is a mighty truth."

"The spirit-creed does not recognise any need of propitiation towards this God. It rejects as false any notion of the Divine Being vindictively punishing a transgressor or requiring a vicarious sacrifice for sin," etc.

"The idea of a good God," [1] wrote Mr. Stainton-Moses, "sacrificing His sinless Son as a propitiation for man is repudiated as monstrous. Equally strong is the rejection of the notion of a store of merit laid up by the death of this incarnate God, on which the vilest reprobate may draw at his death, and gain access to the society of God and the perfected. In place of this it is said that man can have no saviour outside of himself; that no second per-

[1] *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*, p. 104.

son can relieve him from the consequences of the conscious transgression of known laws; that no transference of merit can wipe out in a moment a state which is the result of a lifetime's work, nor counterbalance that which is indelible, save by slow process of obliteration, even as it was built up; that man stands alone in his responsibility for his deeds, and must work out his own salvation and atone for his own sin."

According to the belief of the modern spiritist, then, *man is his own saviour* in the literal sense and meaning of that term, and it is to no other saviour, human or divine, that he must look for help and deliverance. For him the Christian teaching about the Person of Christ is the invention of theologians, and has no real foundation in the Sacred Writings.

"If you will read the records," writes Imperator, "which so imperfectly record the earth-life of Jesus, you will not find that He claimed for Himself any such position as the Christian Church has since forced upon Him. He was more such as we preach Him than such as the Church called by His name has made Him.

"No doubt it was a current belief, at the time when many of the writers of books in the Bible composed the treatises which you call inspired, that Jesus was God, and harsh denunciations are made against any who should deny the dogma. No doubt also

that the same men believed also that He would, in mysterious manner, return in the clouds to judge the world, and that before their generation should die. They were mistaken in both beliefs, and over one at least more than 1,800 years have rolled and still the return is unaccomplished. So we might push the argument were it necessary."

Thus to the spiritist the Divine Son of God becomes a mere seer or prophet or medium, a spirit of an exalted order and of superior intelligence, Who, being in rapport with the highest spheres of knowledge and of wisdom, was in a position to impart truths far in advance of His age and generation. And, being Himself possessed of the key to many of the deeper secrets of nature, He was able to work real miracles — to heal the leper, to restore sight to the blind, and, in exceptional instances, to raise even the dead to life again. He had power, too, over the material forces of the universe. But it was not by reason of His inherent Divine Nature, of His oneness with the Father, in the sense of the Christian Creed, that these things were effected, not because He possessed the attributes and exercised the power of Deity, but because He had, in the spirit-spheres, attained to an exceptional insight into matters, had learned how to manipulate and control the natural forces, and was Himself possessed of a bodily organisation so subtle and refined that He was

able to operate as a true medium between the sphere of spirit and that of matter.

"In the case of most incarnate spirits," writes Mr. Stainton-Moses' controls, "who have descended to minister on earth, the assumption of corporeity dims spiritual vision and cuts it off from remembrance of its previous existence. Not so with him. So little did his ethereal body blind the sense of spirit that he could converse with the angels as one of their own order, who was cognisant of their life, and remembered his own part in it before incarnation.

"His remembrance of previous life was never blunted, and a great part of his time was spent in disunion from the body and in conscious communion with spirit. Long trances, as you call the interior state, fitted him for this, as you may see in some distorted passages of your records — the supposed Temptation, for instance, or that which speaks of his habit of meditating and praying alone on the mountain-top, or in the Garden Agony. . . .

"His life, but little hampered by the body — which, indeed, was but a temporary envelope to his spirit, assumed only when it was necessary for the spirit to come in contact with material things — was different in degree, though not in kind, from the ordinary life of man — purer, simpler, nobler, more loving, and more loved. Such a life could never be understood aright by those who were con-

temporary with it. It is of necessity that such lives should be misunderstood, misinterpreted, maligned, and mistaken. It is so in a degre with all that step out from the ranks, but especially with him."

And what Jesus did and effected during His earthly life is, it is asserted, but a type of what can in large measure be effected by all those possessed of similar transcendental powers, and diligently applying themselves to the development and cultivation of those powers. The difference between Him and them is one of degree, not of kind. Some of the miracles which He worked have, it is claimed, been worked by other highly developed mediums before and since His time, and they may, even though in a more modest degree, be exhibited in any successful séance of the present day. And even His resurrection from the grave can be shown to be on a line with those spirit-materialisations which constantly occur in the presence of good sensitives, and the objectivity and reality of which the camera has so effectively and conclusively demonstrated.

It is by such a method of reasoning, by such modes of establishing identity between Jesus of Nazareth and the modern spirit-medium, that the conception of the Christ, the Saviour of the world, vanishes away, and that an exalted but purely human personality, prophet, seer, medium, mahatma,

or whatever other designation the individual occultist may adopt, takes His place.

"We would have you know," writes Imperator, "that the spiritual ideal of Jesus the Christ is no more like the human notion, with its accessories of Atonement and Redemption, as men have grasped them, than was the calf ignorantly carved by the ancient Hebrews like the God who strove to reveal Himself to them."

"It is when we come to deal with the central figure in the Gospel story," writes Mr. Stainton-Moses,[1] "that the divergence (between the old orthodox view and the new spiritistic one) becomes most marked. The mysteriously incarnated God shades away into the divinest type of human nature. The being like nothing man can reach — so infinitely high and lifted up above human nature — gives place to the VERY MAN, the highest realisation of man's possible; the actual living model which man may place before him for daily imitation. The God who lived amongst men gives place to the man who lived nearest God. We have lost a God-made man, but we have gained a model man, all but Divine. The loss is in the humanised God, the gain is in the God-like man."

Why this same extraordinary medium, appearing

[1] *Higher Aspects.*

in a benighted world, keenly anxious to be certain of a life beyond the grave, and Himself knowing the secret of spirit-intercourse and the best means of obtaining this much-desired knowledge, did not say a single word on the subject, did not leave a single instruction as to how a séance may safely and effectively be held, how we may best put ourselves in sensible communication with the departed dead, and how we may most successfully guard against those grave moral and physical perils constantly attending this intercourse, spiritists do not explain, and spiritistic literature does not record. And yet all right-minded men must feel that if this view of the nature of Christ's Person and of the aim and purpose of His coming, be the true one, we might reasonably look for some such instruction, and in any case expect the statements of the New Testament and of the early Christian records to be somewhat different from what they actually are. It must surely be clear to the simplest understanding that the spirit-intercourse there spoken of is far other than that which has its source in the modern séance room, and which is brought about by mediumistic agency and by the abnormal physical and constitutional conditions of sensitives.

It may here be objected that there are some spiritists whose writings would seem to express belief in the divinity of Christ, and who have not appar-

ently broken away from the historic creed of Christendom. This is undoubtedly the case, and the writer has himself come in personal contact with such persons. But he has invariably found that spiritists occupying this position either hold the spiritistic creed in a very loose and modified form, and do not in any marked way identify themselves with the modern cult, or that they put upon the Christian creed that modern and "liberal" interpretation, which at this present time is doing so much to undermine belief in the true supernatural, and which, as all accurate thinkers know, is virtually a denial of it. They are Christians in a new and quite modern acceptation of the term, and in most instances repudiate the very fundamental doctrines upon which the Christian system reposes.

And the spirits themselves, ever ready to accommodate themselves to the current tendencies of thought, and to undermine the old ideas "by loosening the ropes gradually, and one by one," as "Imperator" once said to Stainton-Moses, will at times speak in terms implying belief in the historic creed of Christianity. This is, however, a mere ruse on their part, very apt to mislead the inexperienced and uninitiated, but scarcely likely to deceive those who, from intimate knowledge of their methods, have come to entertain doubts as to the orthodoxy of the spirits, and who formulate their questions accordingly.

Thus the writer on one occasion elicited the following answers to questions addressed to spirits who were triumphantly asserted to have expressed their belief in the divinity of Christ: —

Q. What do you teach concerning the person of Jesus Christ?

A. We believe as you believe, and we endeavour to obey and follow His teaching.

Q. Do you believe in and teach His divinity — that He is the Son of God?

A. We thoroughly believe this. We are *all* the sons of God, and there is in all men a spark of the Divine.

Q. But is He the Son of God in a unique and special sense, of one substance with God, and in this sense altogether different from man in nature and in origin?

A. We have no such belief.

Q. Do you hold and teach the doctrine of the incarnation as it is contained in the New Testament?

A. Yes, certainly. Each human soul imprisoned in a human body is an incarnation in the truest sense.

Q. But do you hold and teach that Christ's incarnation was a unique and distinctive manifestation of God, effected with a unique aim and purpose for the redemption and salvation of man, and for his restoration to the favour of God?

A. We have no such belief.

Q. Have you seen Christ since your departure from the body?

A. No, we have not seen Him because we are not in His sphere. But we have heard of those who have beheld Him, and who have benefited by His teaching.

It will be seen from this how very easy it is for the inexperienced and incautious to be misled by spirit communications of this character, and to place upon them interpretations which they are certainly not intended to bear. The spirits are in the habit of using a general and equivocal phraseology adapted to the peculiar mental tendencies of the particular circle in which they communicate, and to steer a course which enables them to sail very near the truth, so that sometimes the suspicions of the most wary of inquirers are apt to be lulled to sleep. It is only a searching and painstaking examination and insistence upon exact statements and upon the use of an accurate phraseology, that are likely to elicit the truth and to disclose the real character of their teaching.

The appearance, at spirit séances, of the "materialised" Christ, has from time to time been recorded, and it need hardly be said that the phantom is reported to have invariably confirmed the teaching of modern spiritism, and to have urged a fuller and

bolder proclamation of its truths. The writer has not, however, come across an instance in which a personal and authentic account could be obtained of the occurrence.

As regards the existence and personality of satan, so clearly taught by Christ, the spirits counselled Mr. Stainton-Moses "to cease to be perplexed by thoughts of an imagined devil. For the honest and truth-seeking soul," they said, "there is no devil nor prince of evil such as theology has feigned," and to his direct question as to whether the undeveloped spirits so frequently communicating at séances had any chief, the reply was: "Chiefs many who govern, but no such devil as theologians have feigned. Spirits, good and bad, are subject to the rule of commanding intelligences."

On the subject of the resurrection of Christ a diversity of views are entertained amongst spiritists, unanimity of mind existing only in their repudiation of the historic doctrine. Some teach that the body of Christ had, by suffering and ascetic exercises, attained such a high degree of subtleness and refinement that it had practically become independent of the laws of matter, and could already here move and operate after the fashion of a spirit. It was not surprising, therefore, it is urged, that a body so lightly and loosely put together and contain-

ing so little material subject to corruption, should dissolve and disintegrate upon withdrawal of the life principle, and that its delicate component parts should be readily absorbed by the air, or ether, or astral forces, which had contributed towards its construction.

Other spiritists favour the notion that the physical body was in some way disposed of by the disciples, and that it was the astral or spirit body of Jesus which, both before and after His death, operated under certain conditions and apart from the natural body, and that it was this body that was seen by the disciples.

The modern spirit-materialisations go, it is claimed, to throw considerable light upon this subject, and there is every probability that the form in which Jesus appeared after His death was of the kind and quality, and possessed of the same powers, as the spirit-bodies evolved through the agency of a good materialising medium. The writer has heard it asserted in spiritistic circles that there is at least in one instance some evidence of such a materialisation having taken place, the medium (unconsciously, of course), on that occasion having in all probability been the gardener (see St. John xx). It is to the circumstance that materialised spirits, on their first manifestation, invariably bear a strong likeness to the medium from whose body the psy-

chic substance is withdrawn, that the mistake of St. Mary Magdalene is to be ascribed.

And with the disappearance of these root principles of historical and primitive Christianity, the entire traditional conception of the Church as the Divine Society instituted by Christ to carry on His work to the end of time and, by supernatural means and ordinances, exercised by a divinely ordained priesthood, to draw men into the supernatural sphere and to make them partakers of the Divine life, of necessity also vanishes away. Christ cannot and does not bestow and perpetuate what He does not really possess, and man cannot desire what is, in a true sense, already his own — inherent in his nature and part of his birthright, and requiring but to be developed and cultivated and to be called into active operation within himself. There is, strictly speaking, no heaven to be gained, no hell to be escaped, both being but subjective states or conditions of soul, incidental to its life of progressive education and evolution both here and hereafter.

"We know of no hell," say the spirits, "save that within the soul; a hell which is fed by the flame of unpurified lust and passion, which is kept alive by remorse and agony of sorrow, which is fraught with the pangs that spring unbidden from the results of past misdeeds, and from which the only

escape lies in retracing the steps and in cultivating the qualities which shall bear fruit in love and knowledge of God."

"Judgment," too, "is ceaseless, for the soul is ever fitting itself for its change. No such arraignment before the assembled universe as is in your mind. That is an allegory."

"The burdens that a dogmatic priesthood has bound upon men's backs, we fling them to the winds; the dogmas which have hampered the soul, and dragged down its aspirations, we tear them asunder and bid the soul go free. Our mission is the continuation of that old teaching which man has so strangely altered; its source identical, its course parallel, its end the same."

"The Christian Revelation, moreover, and the Catholic Creed present no fixed and unalterable truth. According to the spirit-creed, the revelation of God is progressive, bounded by no time, confined to no people. It has never ceased."

From this brief examination of the teaching of modern spiritism, as it is presented to us in the most accredited and authoritative spiritistic literature [1] and in the disclosures of spirit-intelligences

[1] "Spiritualism is an experimental science," writes Professor Wallace, "and affords the only sure foundation for a true philosophy and a pure religion. It abolishes the term 'supernatural' and 'miracle' by an extension of the sphere of law and the realm of nature; and in doing so it takes

of a superior order and of intellectual power, the following will now become clear. However diverse this teaching may be on all matters of secondary importance, there is absolute agreement and unanimity on these points: —

1. That Christianity cannot be regarded as a revelation of a unique and specific character, foreshadowed in the Jewish ordinances, foretold by prophet and seer, and completed and consummated on Calvary and on the day of Pentecost; but that it is one of many forms of high spirit-manifestation designed to enforce upon man the binding obligations of the moral law inherent in his nature, and to remind him of the true character of his high origin and destiny.

2. That Christ is not divine in the sense in which the Church throughout all ages has understood that term and has believed and taught Him to be divine. That He is, on the contrary, a human being like ourselves — at best perhaps a spirit of a high order and possessed of remarkable gifts and powers, Who, descending from the higher spheres and assuming a human body, was content to lay down His life as a

up and explains whatever is true in the superstitions and so-called miracles of all ages. It, and it alone, is able to harmonise conflicting creeds; it must ultimately lead to concord among mankind in the matter of religion, which has for so many ages been the source of unceasing discord and incalculable evil; and it will be able to do this because it appeals to evidence instead of faith, and substitutes facts for opinions; and is thus able to demonstrate the source of much of the teaching that men have so often held to be Divine."

testimony to the truth of the doctrines which He taught.

3. That the teaching of the Catholic Church respecting His character and person and the aim and purpose of His death, is based upon a misconception, due to human error and weakness, and to subsequent philosophical thought and speculation.

4. That there is no priesthood specially set apart and ordained by Christ with a view to perpetuating His work and to forming the link between the sphere of the human and the Divine.

5. That the Church, with its sacramental institutions for the effectual carrying out of this work and for the raising of the human soul to a supernatural life, for the imparting to it of supernatural gifts and graces, is a vain thing fondly invented, and at best an institution of mere human origin and doing a purely human work.

6. That the scriptural notion of retribution after death and of punishment for sin committed in the flesh is a misreading and misinterpretation of the words of Christ and of those feelings of failure and of loss which necessarily attend the slow process of human evolution, retribution only taking place in the sense that suffering must follow upon wrong, wilfully or ignorantly done, in order that thus the way to right doing and to right conduct may be found.

7. That man is daily and hourly, by his own deeds and misdeeds, and by the general moulding and

shaping of his character, preparing for himself his own heaven or his own hell; that these are, however, far other than those which theology holds and inculcates.

8. That physical death does not in any sense determine the destiny of the human spirit: but that, irrespective of personal beliefs or dis- or misbeliefs, its training and education are continued and indefinitely prolonged in the spirit-spheres.

9. That man is in fact, in the truest sense of the word, *his own saviour.*

Our examination, in short, of the teaching of modern spiritism, has clearly gone to show that, whatever else the spirit-creed may be, it is utterly and wholly incompatible with, and indeed manifestly antagonistic to, the teaching of Holy Scripture and to the traditional creed of Christendom.

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